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BOOK OF JOB.
TIME IN ENGLISH.
BY
ERNEST RENAN.

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ROBERT LAIRD BORDEN

A. K. Madsen

1893



THE BOOK OF JOB.

THE
BOOK OF JOB

TRANSLATED FROM THE HEBREW.

With a Study upon the Age and Character of the Poem.

BY
ERNEST RENAN N
(*Member of the French Academy*).

RENDERED INTO ENGLISH

BY
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LONDON :
W. M. THOMSON,
MARLBOROUGH HOUSE, LUDGATE HILL, E.C.



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TRANSLATORS' PREFACE.

IN presenting this translation to the public, the translators have been careful to render both the text and metrical portion as closely as possible to M. Renan's language; they have merely clothed his words in an English dress. It will be observed that the metrical portion differs in several respects from what is known as "the revised version," but when it is recollect that the revisers were limited and confined by certain rules, binding them to differ as little as possible from what is known as "the authorised version," which was prepared by men unacquainted with Hebrew, and who only translated from the Greek, the differences which will be noticed are at once accounted for. M. Renan had, for some years previous to the publication of "Le Livre de Job," been recognised as the first Hebrew scholar of his day.

In 1848 he gained the Volney Prize at Paris for a "Memoire" on the Semitic languages, which he published under the name of "Histoire Generale et Systemes compares de Langues Semitique," and thus proved beyond question his capacity for undertaking the task of translating the present work, which he published in 1859.

The translators have endeavoured throughout to preserve the Oriental rhythm, and to follow up the idea upon which M. Renan has acted.

PREFACE.

THE book of Job may be regarded as the ideal of a Semitic poem. The translation which I offer to the public belongs thus to the collection of works which I have undertaken upon the languages and the genius of the peoples to which we are accustomed to give the name of Semites. Many of the traits by which I have endeavoured, in another work,* to exhibit the character of these peoples may have seemed obscure or excited some astonishment. I could not therefore respond better to the just requirements of persons who demand on this point the most ample explanations, than in showing to them how the Semitic genius has depicted itself in its most original creation and, if I may say so, in its most perfect mirror.

I have also been desirous of showing how I believe it to be possible for a person to translate the works of the ancient genius of the Hebrews. It seems to me that translators in general understand their duties in a very incomplete manner. They imagine that they preserve the colour of the original when they preserve certain turns which are opposed to the genius of the language into which they translate; they do not dream that a language ought never to be half spoken or half written. There is no reason for adopting such a view, and if, on the pretext of fidelity, one indulges in such idioms as

* "General History of Semitic Languages," liv. 1, chap. i.

can only be understood by the aid of a commentary, why not come at once to that system of counter-drawing whereby the translator, in limiting himself to superimposing word upon word, gives himself little concern as to whether his version be as obscure as the original, and leaves the reader the task of discovering its sense? Such licence is permissible in German, I know, but this is one of the facilities which I least begrudge our friends across the Rhine. The French language is austere; one cannot make conditions with it. One of course is at liberty not to write it; but when one undertakes this difficult task, one must place one's hand tied between the two prongs of an authorised dictionary, and of a grammar which usage has consecrated.

Is it needful to add that translation thus understood, especially where it is a question of works which are very ancient or have been created by a genius widely different from ours, is an ideal to which no one can attain? Every translation is necessarily imperfect, inasmuch as it is the result of a compromise between two conflicting obligations: on the one hand, the obligation of being as literal as possible, on the other; the obligation of being French. But of these two obligations there is one which does not admit of compromise, and that is the second. The duty of the translator, when he has grasped the idea of the original, is simply to reproduce it in a perfectly correct French sentence. If the work which he translates is much removed from our habits of mind, it goes without saying that his translation, in spite of his utmost efforts, exhibits some singular features, turns little in consonance with our tastes and peculiarities which demand explanation; but that which he is absolutely interdicted from doing is to commit a fault against the obligatory rules of the language. Cer-

tainly, I do not flatter myself that I have attained to this degree of perfection ; I simply announce here the programme which I have imposed upon myself, and of which account ought to be taken in order to appreciate the difficulties with which I have had to struggle. It would have been much more easy for me to be *literal*, but should I really have been *faithful* if, in translating an admirable work, I had given room for the question which one asks oneself so often in reading ancient versions of the Hebrew books—How did it happen that the author of this beautiful book did not possess common sense ?

My aim in this volume not being that of adding another commentary to the writings so numerous of which the book of Job has been the text, I have limited myself to making notes to such passages as are absolutely indispensable for a proper understanding of the work. Every time when it has struck me that an instructed man, on a simple reading of my translation, may not have been able to grasp sufficiently the thought of the author, I have endeavoured to explain it as briefly as possible. I have forbidden myself all other elucidations, and in particular long discussions where it would have been necessary to show reasons for each of the senses which I have adopted. The reason for adhering to this plan is very simple. The book of Job has, during the last century, been productive of a whole library of dissertations. From the day when the illustrious Albert Schultens opened a new era in the interpretation of this book, in having recourse to a comparison with other Semitic languages (until then too much neglected in exegesis), there is not a verselet in the book of Job which has not given scope for long commentaries. It may be fearlessly asserted that the majority of those passages which in this precious text

are still obscure will remain so. The new readings, except in cases where they are supported by some fact previously unknown, have, in a matter so learnedly elaborate, very little chance of being true. I have the satisfaction of telling the reader that, putting to one side some slight matters in regard to which I believe I have come very close to the meaning of the author, I cannot recall a single passage where I have admitted a reading entirely new, and which has not been advanced by more than one philologist. It will doubtless be said that amongst so many diverse opinions I was obliged to make a choice, and that I should consequently give the reasons for my choice. This would be quite just if the question of opinions in regard to such matters did not involve a long discussion; but in the present case this obligation would have constrained me to repeat at interminable lengths that which has already been said. Let one read the works of Schultens, Reiske, Rosenmüller, Schärer, Umbreit, Lee, Stickel, Ewald, Arnheim, Hirzel, Hahn, Schlottmann, and of Cahen; there one will find the reason for that which I can only set forth here in the form of a result. In particular I advise people who desire to grasp the meanings which I have adopted to have always under their eyes the commentary of Hirzel. This work is far from being the one which has most contributed to the progress of the interpretation of the book of Job; but different opinions are therein discussed with much judgment, and I have often been led to adopt those which are given there as being the most probable.

A complete course of the Hebrew tongue and literature would be necessary to make the non-Hebraistic reader comprehend the proportions which are mixed up in those delicate studies—the certain, the probable, and that which must be

discarded. Two causes create eternal insoluble difficulties in the interpretation of these old texts —on the one hand, the small number of Hebrew monuments which have come down to us, these monuments all being embraced in a volume of mediocre extent; on the other the impossible position in which we are placed of comparing anterior manuscripts so as to fix definitely the received text. What are we to do when we only meet with a word once in the whole range of Hebrew literature, or when the two or three employments of it that one can adduce do not suffice to determine precisely its shade of meaning? The testimony of the ancient translators, who had no other resources than we ourselves have with which to overcome these difficulties, nay who even had fewer, seeing that they lacked the aids of comparative philology, is then wholly insufficient. What are we to do, especially when we are confronted with a passage where we clearly apprehend there is something at fault, and where we have no means by which to remedy it? I am of opinion that the number of such passages is more considerable than one thinks; but I recognise at the same time that we must be on our guard in proceeding hence to propose bold corrections. Perhaps when Semitic palaeography is more advanced (and it is permissible to hope for considerable progress in this, in view of what has been accomplished in late years, thanks to the labours of M. le Duc de Luynes and of several other learned antiquaries), it will be possible to advance, yet always with the utmost caution, in that perilous path. But at the present time the Masserotic text ought to be our guide. It is to this text that my translation belongs, except in one or two places where everybody is all but agreed that it should be corrected.

The division into chapters which was intro-

duced at an epoch posterior to the composition of the poem, and not always being very natural, has been departed from here; I have, following the example of the majority of translators, substituted for it spaces accommodated to our typographical usages. We know that the book of Job is composed of discourses in verse fitted into a text in prose; this distinction has been marked by the employment of a different character. The separation of the verselets and the verses, which is *bien de fait* of the author, has been maintained throughout. The rhythm of Hebrew poetry consisting exclusively of the symmetrical recurrence of the members of the phrase, it has always seemed to me that the true manner of translating the poetical works of the Hebrews was to preserve this parallelism, which our processes of versification, founded upon rhyme, quantity, and a rigorous computation of syllables, disfigure entirely. I have hence used my best efforts to make the reader feel in my translation something of the sonorous cadence which gives so much charm to the Hebrew text. It is certain that, the metre of these old poems consisting solely of a sort of *rhyme of thoughts*, every translation ought to be careful to give this rhyme as well as it is given in the original. But the imperious necessities of our somewhat prolix language have sometimes forced me to make concessions upon this point. I ought to say also, by way of excuse, that all the parts of the poem are far from offering, under the relation of parallelism, the same strictness, or, if I may say so, the same perfection.

I would not have completed my task if I had not examined in this connection the questions of history and of criticism raised by the poem of Job, and in regard to which it is essential to be positive, if it is wished to fully comprehend that

monument, one of the most curious that antiquity has bequeathed to us. But I ought beforehand to impart to the reader a hope that I had formed, but which has changed into a bitter regret. In conversing last winter with M. Ary Scheffer about the poem I had translated, I obtained from him a promise which, if it could have been fulfilled, would have been most valuable, and for a philosophic knowledge and *morale* of the book of Job the best of commentaries. The principal events of that admirable book were traced in his thoughts in strong images; he wished to fix them in pictures which, drawn in water colours, would have been added to the present essay. Those who know the elevated style that M. Scheffer, in his last years, had commenced to apply to the scenes of the Old Testament, can easily imagine the sublimity his pencil would have created when applied to scenes like the following:—Satan criticising the weak sides of creation; Satan espying the rich man in order to surprise him; the just man, conscious of his rectitude, protesting his innocence before God himself; and other subjects which his brilliant pencil would have created upon that antique and grandiose legend. Death permitted him to finish only one of these compositions. Hardly has the grand sentiment which he had for things religious inspired him more deeply. Satan advances into the presence of God and wishes to penetrate boldly into the divine mysteries of the plan of the world, whilst the sons of God are silently ranged around, some adoring with closed eyes the secrets of Providence, others penetrating by the intuition of their pure souls the mysteries which could not be revealed by reason. The respect due to the works of the illustrious dead, and the recollection of the perpetual retouchings that he made to his most finished compositions, have alone hindered me

from giving to the world this beautiful design. Alas! what lessons of moral elevation, what a source of deep emotions and of lofty thoughts have disappeared from our age, so poor in grand souls, with the last breath of that man of heart and genius!

STUDY

UPON THE AGE AND CHARACTER OF THE
BOOK OF JOB.

STRANGE difficulties present themselves to the historian when he attempts to determine the epoch and the social circle to which the poem of Job belongs. At first glance, in fact, this poem occupies in Hebrew literature a position somewhat isolated. The personages which figure in it are not Jews; the place where the scene is laid is outside Palestine; the worship which we see practised there is that of the patriarchal epoch. Job is the priest of his family; he practises rites which do not form parts of any of the usages peculiar to the religion of Israel; not a single allusion is made to Mosaic customs, nor to the peculiar creed of the Jews. This combination of circumstances has given rise to an opinion which has for long been widespread and been adopted by learned critics, which is, that the book of Job cannot be of Hebrew origin. Such an opinion is certainly untenable, if one is to understand by it that the language of the book of Job is not pure Hebrew, or even that the Hebrew text which we have is the translation of a work written in another Semitic dialect. But it embraces a great deal of truth if we only mean to say that the atmosphere into which this curious book trans-

ports us is not more peculiarly Hebraic than Idumean or Ismaelitish, and that the foundation of the ideas which are found there belongs in common to the nomadic branch of the Semitic race, without any of the features which assign to the Jewish people, in the midst of this family, a position so characteristic.

Let us reflect on the consequences which proceed from this important fact, and we shall see that two hypotheses only can be advanced to explain it. If, on the one hand, the poem of Job was written in Hebrew by a Hebrew (no doubt, I imagine, rests any longer on this point in the mind of any exegete), if, on the other, the foundation of the ideas of the book of Job has nothing peculiarly Hebraistic, it is necessary again to suppose that the composition of the book was anterior to the epoch when the religious institutions of the Hebrews took their definite form through the Mosaic legislation; further, that the Jewish author who wrote it, in wishing to give us a specimen of Temanite wisdom, just as Plato has given us in the *Timæus* an essay on Pythagorean philosophy, and in *Parmenides* an essay on eclectic philosophy, possessed sufficient literary acumen to give to his personages the ideas only and a language compatible with the epoch and the country in which he had placed the events of his poem. I admit that the literary phenomena which the book of Job presents to us in the second hypothesis appear to me destitute of all probability. Antiquity had no notion of that which we call local colouring. The Alexandrian author of the book of *Wisdom*, and even, in some respects, the author of the book of *Ecclesiastes*, makes Solomon speak as if he belonged to their times. The book of Daniel, which belongs to the epoch of the Maccabees, in its representation of the Assyrian epoch, makes very grave misrepresenta-

tions. Jesus, son of Sirach, Philo, and Josephus in particular, speak of the ancient patriarchs with a historic sentiment as shadowy as that of Titus-Livius when he is treating of the antique times of Rome. I cannot then admit that a Hebrew of a far back period (we shall demonstrate soon that we cannot place the book of Job further back than the seventh century before our era) had the singular idea of composing a patriarchal poem, and had introduced such skill into his design that his work does not once jar, and does not betray in any place the artificial system which presided over his composition.

It can, it is true, be affirmed that the Hebrews preserved for a long time a sentiment quite distinct from the patriarchal life, and that that life was to them a sort of ideal in which they delighted to place their fictions, just as the Greeks did in regard to the heroic epoch. We may add that an attempt at local colouring appears to manifest itself in this remarkable circumstance: that the author, speaking in his own name in the prose parts, calls God *Jehovah*, whilst every time that he makes the Idumeans speak he only puts into their mouths the monotheistic names of *Eloah*, *El*, *Schaddai*. But, beyond the fact that it is not absolutely certain that the prologue and the epilogue were by the same hand as the poem, there is in this a very innocent intention, and which does not imply by any means the degree of literary *finesse* which an entire poem, constructed out of an order of ideas different from that of the author, would exact. Let us add that the vigorous, vivid, and strong colouring of the poem of Job, his austere and grandiose physiognomy, exclude the idea of an imitative picture. An exception ought to be made of the discourse of Elihu, but that exception itself establishes very firmly our principle; for a difference of tone enters into this

discourse, and the rest of the poem strikes, at first view, the least attentive reader.

If the poem of Job is a genuine work, if it expresses accurately the ideas of the times and of the country in which it was composed, without any afterthought of imitation, to what epoch and to what school must it belong? A very old and well-accredited opinion has boldly solved the question. According to this opinion the poem of Job must be the most ancient work of Hebrew literature. As we cannot find in it any trace of Mosaic institutions, it has been concluded hence that the book was anterior to Moses,* and ascends as a composition to the patriarchal age. But in order to free it from such grave difficulties, we, in doing so, expose it to objections much graver still. The language of the book of Job, in the hypothesis in question, ought to contain something archaic and primitive. Now, its language, on the contrary, is singularly artificial and laboured. If one follows only the indications to be drawn from the grammar, one would be tempted to assign the book which now occupies us to the later times of Hebrew literature. The induction which led the ancient expositors to this singular opinion rested, however, on a destructive basis. They were astonished not to find in the book any trace of the Mosaic precepts. But no more do we find such traces in the book of Proverbs, in the history of the Judges and the first Kings, and in general in the writers anterior to the last epoch of the kingdom of Judah. The idea that the Mosaic law, such as we possess it, remounts in its totality to Moses, cannot by any means be sustained.† It is certain

* The wholly gratuitous hypothesis, by which Moses himself was the author of the book of Job, hardly merits to be mentioned.

† Being unable to develop here this important subject, I content myself by referring the reader to the very excellent *résumé* that M. Munk has given of the question in his "Palestine" (p. 132 *et seq.*)

that Moses gave laws to the people, whose deliverer he was ; it is certain also that some parts of the code which is attributed to him belonged in reality to him : but either his precepts were not of a nature to penetrate life very profoundly, or the people of Israel at first paid little attention to them. We do not find that, until the period of reforms and of pietism signalised in the reign of Josiah, the history of Israel had been dominated by the complete body of the institutions, a picture of which is presented to us in the Pentateuch. Now, the nature of these institutions was such that their imprint could not fail to be felt in the whole history of the people ; and, in fact, from the epoch of reform of which we have just been speaking, we find them present, if I may so speak, at every step.

Seeing also that the book of Job is conceived outside of the ideas which we designate with more or less reason, by the name of *Mosaics*, we cannot hence conclude that this book is anterior to Moses. An entire branch of Hebrew literature is in the same position ; I mean the whole of that literature of moral philosophy of which the book of *Proverbs*, a great number of the *Psalms*, the *Song of Songs*, to which we believe we ought to attribute a sufficiently remote antiquity, are notable instances. This literature, generally associated with Solomon, is not specifically Jewish ; it is, like the book which occupies us, purely Semitic. Solomon, who cultivated it with so much success, was in intimate relations with the neighbouring countries to Palestine to such a degree that the purity of his character in the development of the Hebrew mind suffered much from it. His whole history exhibits him to us as a parabolist preoccupied much more with the profane wisdom of nations than with the pure worship of Jehovah. The neighbouring tribes to Palestine, and in particular the *Beni-Kedem* or *Orientals*,

amongst whom was laid the scene of the book of Job, participated in the same philosophy.* The Idumean tribe of Teman in particular, to which belonged the principal adversaries of Job, was celebrated for its sages.† It is, then, certain that there was here a special mode of intellectual culture—a school, if we may so speak, which the children of Israel have alone transmitted to us, but which was not exclusively peculiar to them. It is even probable that amongst the monuments of Hebrew wisdom there have been handed down to us fragments of the wisdom of the neighbouring tribes. This king Lemuel, being the name by which the compiler of the *Proverbs* has conserved to us the *début* of a gnomic poem,‡ has been considered by many critics to be an Arabian king; and, in fact, if his name is not symbolical or fictitious, it must certainly be sought for outside the list of the kings of Israel. The poem of Agur,§ which, with the preceding, presents so many important features of resemblance both in style and manner, has probably an analogous origin.

It is to this great school of parabolic philosophy (one of the glorious titles of the Semitic race) that the book of Job belongs. Although written by a Hebrew, this book presents to us a mode of speculation which did not belong to Palestine. A great number of mythological or astronomical legends, to which allusion is therein made, are not to be found amongst the Hebrews, at least under the same form.|| One sees in them much more clearly the vicinage of Syrian and Babylonian polytheism,

* 1 Kings v. 10 (3 Kings iv. 30 in the Vulgate).

† Jeremiah xlix. 7; Obadiah 9; Baruch iii. 22, 23; compare Job xv. 10, 18, 19.

‡ Chapter xxx 1—9.

§ Proverbs xxx

|| See pages 2, 7, 20, 42, 58, 87, 89 of our translation.

particularly of that which we denominate Sabianism.* A multitude of details, a perfect knowledge of Egypt, where the author seems to have travelled, and of Mount Sinai, where undoubtedly he had seen the working of mines which he describes with so much detail (chap. xxviii.). The fact that all the personages of the poem belong to the *Beni-Kedem*, celebrated for their wisdom, cannot be an arbitrary fiction. This certainly does not imply, as Herder supposes, that the poem may have been written primarily by some Arab living on the borders of Palestine, nor that it is necessary to discover in it the work of some forgotten rival of Solomon ; but this indicates sufficiently that the composition is founded entirely upon an Idumean legend, that the philosophic themes introduced into the discussion are none other than the commonplaces of Semitic rhetoric, and that thus, in the truest sense, their precious leaves have transmitted to us an echo of the ancient wisdom of Teman.

The opinion we have just established as to the character of the poem of Job has, as will be seen, prejudged nothing in regard to the precise epoch in which it was written ; for, although the celebrated epoch of that species of literature of which we speak was the time of Solomon, people continued for a long time after to cultivate, in like manner, the style of the *Kasidas* of ante-Islamic Arabia, which remained in vogue a long time after Mahomet, and that in a state of society altogether different from the one in which this form of poetry was invented. The composition of the book of Job supposes, it is true, a philosophical fraternity between Israel and the neighbouring

* The description of the crocodile and the hippopotamus (chap. xl., xli.) is so life-like that one is induced to see in it a direct reflection of the dread the author experienced in presence of these monsters. Otherwise it is the question of the pyramids, of the papyrus, of the reed barques, &c.

peoples, and it is only during the age of Solomon that we see this fraternity clearly established ; but it was doubtless continued under his successors until the time when the Jewish people, thanks to the influence of the prophets and the pietist kings, became deeply rooted in their own opinions and turned their backs on those of other peoples. The book of *Proverbs* was only compiled under the kings ; *Ecclesiastes* is more modern still, but yet it evidently belongs to the same literary movement. The *Ecclesiasticus* of Jesus, son of Sirach, written in the reign of the Ptolemies, is the last reflection of this ancient gnomic wisdom, which only disappeared completely amongst the Jews when they adopted, or rather when they incorporated into their beliefs, Grecian philosophy. It is, then, to exterior circumstances and to a most attentive examination of the details of the poem that we must look for a solution of a problem which the general considerations adduced above have failed to touch.

We find in Jewish antiquity only two express mentions of the book of Job. The first is in the book of *Ecclesiasticus*, composed about the year 160 B.C. This mention is the expression of an extremely ingenious conjecture, recently put forth by M. Geiger upon verselet 11, chap. xlix., of this book.* The second is in the book of Tobias (ii. 12, 15, Latin text), a book of quite modern date. To speak the truth, these proofs are almost superfluous, since it has never entered the thoughts of any other serious critic that the poem of Job belonged to a time so near our own. M. Vatke, who has pushed to extremes the tendency to rejuvenate the works of

* "Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft," 1858, p. 542-43. The words *τὰν ἐξ θρῶν* of the Greek translation correspond, without the slightest doubt, to the *בָּשָׂר*, Job of the Hebrew text of Ecclesiastes, now lost. The Greek translator, misled probably by the same error in the copy, does not acknowledge in this word a proper name, and has interpreted it according to the sense of the radical.

ancient Hebrew literature, places the book now before us in the epoch of the Persian domination, the century before our era.* We can fearlessly ascend much higher. The poem of Job, at least in its essential parts, is certainly anterior to the captivity. The writings posterior to that memorable event have quite a different character; they are imprints of a rigid Mosaism, of devotion and of an exalted patriotism (Tobias, Esther); the ideas in regard to the rewards and punishments of the future are more advanced in them. The Jewish mind, becoming more and more contracted in view of the great mission it is about to accomplish, loses all freedom, all flexibility. The intellectual affinities of Israel are no longer with the *Beni-Kedem* and the Temanites, but with Persia and then with Greece. We seek in vain in the severe Judaism of that epoch for a place for a work so entirely lovable, filled with a perfume so strong of the nomadic life, and exhibiting such breadth of mind. The bold apostrophes and the energetic protestations of Job would have been regarded by the contemporaries of Esdras and Nehemiah as blasphemies. The taste for theophanies and particular revelations which are remarkable in the book of Job,† and which are to be found in the poem of Agur,‡ do not belong to the Persian epoch; the old theology of the sons of God, of the rebel Dragon, &c., are no longer of those times. The language, finally, of the book of Job has a firmness, a beauty, which one will search for in vain in the writings of an age in which the Hebrew language was no longer spoken—at least in its purity—and had become the heritage of the scribes and of the lettered.

A passage, very grave, though not very decisive,

* "Die Biblische Theologie," p. 570 *et seq.*

† See pages 10, 74, 87 *et seq.* of our translation.

‡ Proverbs xxx

of Ezekiel (xiv. 14 *et seq.*) confirms what precedes. Ezekiel, being desirous of naming three just persons *par excellence*, cites Noah, Daniel, and Job. Ezekiel commenced to prophesy in the year 595. We have then the certainty that Job, in the sixth century before our era, had attained the status of a man who was celebrated for his sanctity, and that already a legend concerning him had been formed. But can we hence conclude that the book which bears his name existed? We can do so positively. This book, in fact, is not a simple recital of experiences and of the patience of Job; it is a fictitious composition, in which the experiences of the old patriarch are selected as the theme for philosophical discussions. These discussions, far from being of a nature to elevate the patience of Job, suggest rather by their singular boldness the idea that Ezekiel did not know of them when he held up Job as a saint. Everything leads to the belief that the legend of Job is more ancient than the book of Job. Popular celebrities are not created by an isolated book, especially during times when people wrote and read little; moreover, purely dramatic and romantic fictions were not to the taste of the ancient Hebrews. It is then probable that there existed in the time of Ezekiel some edifying narratives of the sufferings and the piety of Job; but nothing in the passage cited proves that Job had already been made the subject of a sort of philosophical tragedy. What indeed shows that such a consequence is an exaggeration is that Job is named along with Daniel.* Now, it is impossible

* Daniel is represented in other passages of Ezekiel as an accomplished sage (xxxviii. 3). Now Daniel, according to the book which bears his name, must be younger than Ezekiel, since, in the most favourable hypothesis, he arrived in Babylon (a child) in the year 604 B.C. The only way of explaining this curious fact is to suppose that the legend of Daniel, such as Ezekiel knew it, belonged to a more ancient epoch, probably the Ninevite epoch, and which subsequently

that the book of Daniel, such as we possess it, existed at the time in which Ezekiel wrote that passage, since in the book of Daniel events in the reign of Cyrus are mentioned.

A much stronger proof of the existence of the book of Job in the century which preceded the captivity is gathered from various passages in Jeremiah; whence it seems to result that Jeremiah had read the book in question and had borrowed passages from it. Can one doubt this after reading the following passage?*—

Cursed be the day wherein I was born : let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed.

Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee ; making him very glad

And let that man be as the cities which the Lord overthrew, and repented not : and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noon tide,

Because he slew me not from the womb ; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb to be always great with me.

Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame ?

Let one compare this passage with the eloquent maledictions of Job (iii. 3 *et seq.*, x. 18), and one will not hesitate to say which of the two authors † has copied the other. The effeminacy, the heaviness, the absence of timbre and of parallelism which characterise the passage in Jeremiah denote clearly the change which already had been wrought in the language and poetic spirit of the nation at the epoch in which that poet wrote—that is to say,

was transported to Babylon and to the epoch of Nebuchadnezzar. The compilation of the book of Daniel, such as we have it, belongs only to the times of the Seleucidæ.

* Jeremiah xx. 14 *et seq.*

† There exist, besides, two or three parallel, though less striking, passages between Job and Jeremiah. Jeremiah, moreover, is addicted to that sort of reminiscences. There are to be found in him many passages taken from other Hebrew writings. “V. Kueper *Jeremiæ Liborum Sacrorum Interpres atque Vindex*” (Berlin, 1837), p. 104 *et seq.*

in the second half of the seventh century. So there is no longer, I believe, a single Hebraist who does not place the composition of the book of Job one hundred years at least before the captivity—that is to say, about the year 700.*

That which prevents Hebraists in general from going back further than this is the character of the language of the book of Job, which appears to them modern and savours already of the Chaldeism of later ages. Gesenius especially has insisted upon this consideration,† but it must be avowed that the observations of this philologist, so learned and so judicious, lack in this instance *finesse*. Amongst all the idioms that he has collected, I have not seen any of them which indicated an enfeebled language, and which are not to be found in the writings of Amos, Hosea, and in the song of Deborah, the antiquity of which is acknowledged by the whole world. The language of the book of Job is Hebrew, the most limpid, the most terse, and the most classic. We find in it all the qualities of the ancient style, conciseness, a tendency to the riddle, an energetic emphasis resembling the blow of a hammer, a breadth of meaning far removed from all commonplace, which leaves the mind something to fill up, that charming ring which resembles that of solid and pure metal. Nowhere does one feel further removed from that lax fluency, from those platitudes which belong to a language which has ceased to be spoken and which is cultivated artificially. The number of difficulties which arrest the philologist is an excellent criterion when the question is the age of the Hebrew writings. Now, difficulties are encountered in the book of Job almost at each step; in the fragments of later

* This is the common opinion in Germany. In France it is also the opinion of M. Munk, "Palestine," p. 449.

† "Geschichte der Herbräischen Sprache," p. 33 *et seq.*

periods, on the contrary—in certain psalms, for example—we have presented to us a language clear and prolix, and offering very few obstacles. Grammar is unquestionably a precious succour in questions of that nature; but the *taste* ought also to be cultivated. Now, here the Hebraic man of taste cannot hesitate. Two or three old grammars would never prevail in his mind over the induction which results from the general character of the poem, a character which is so far removed from all decadence. I say the same of the *Song of Songs*, which, notwithstanding the opinion of the grammarians, I dare refer to the epochs the most brilliant and the most unconstrained in the spirit of Israel.

According to the argument drawn from grammar, the strongest proofs by which it is sought to establish that the book of Job must be placed about the time of the captivity are extracted from the important revelations which are presented in this book in regard to the theory of the angels and the demons. But, at bottom, this portion of the theology of the book of Job, if we except, perhaps, the discourse of Elihu, does not outrun the circle of beliefs which we find amongst the Hebrews before their contact with Assyria and Persia. The angels are still embraced in the purely Semitic notion of the *Beni-Elohim* or *Sons of God*. The *Kedoshim*, Saints intercessors (v. 1), may also, indeed, be regarded as a remnant of the *Elohim* or *Beni-Elohim*, which was borrowed from the *ferouers* of Persia. Satan, who figures in the prologue, is by no means the Ahriman of the Zenō Avesta: he does nothing except at the command of God; he is an angel of a more malicious character than the others—a sharper, and inclined to curse;* he is

* Herber (fifth dialogue on the Poetry of the Hebrews) has clearly recognised this.

not an evil genius existing and acting through himself. Let us take this into account besides. The consideration that I combat at present would lead to the placing of the compilation at the epoch of the Achæmenides, since it was only about this time that the doctrines of Zoroaster exercised a most marked influence upon the Hebrews. Now, the composition of the book of Job would, at an age so modern, be truly inexplicable. The discourse of Elihu itself could hardly be brought down to this age.

Can it be said that it would be permissible to put back the composition of the book of Job to the epoch in which at first it was sought to place it, I mean to the time of Solomon?* To this grave difficulties oppose themselves. To mention only a single one, I could easily show that no decisive reason authorises the separation of the prologue and the epilogue from the rest of the poem; now, in the prologue we see the Chaldeans figuring (*Kasdīm*) as a people living by rapine. The *Kasdīm* did not appear among the Hebrews in this character until about the epoch of Uzziah, King of Judah, and of Menahem, King of Israel, in the times of Amos, Hosea, and of Isaiah, about 770 before Jesus Christ. It is at this middle epoch of the kingdoms of Judah and of Israel, an epoch in which the ancient nomadic spirit was far from being extinct, and when the powerful reforms of the times of Josiah had not yet given to the nation the energetic bent which predestined it to act so extraordinary a part, that I prefer to place the composition of the book of Job. The lively and precise style of the age of Sôlomon had not yet given place to the lachrymose preaching of the epoch of Jeremiah. The book of *Proverbs* was compiled in part by the order of Hezekiah

* M. Schlottmann does not hesitate to go further back.

(725-696 before Jesus-Christ), and we see gathered around that prince a sort of academy occupied with parabolic poetry.* The Song of Hezekiah itself† has a great deal of relationship with the poetry of the book of Job. Finally, many passages of Isaiah (about 750)‡ recall so many passages of the book of Job that we see clearly that these two authors have imbibed these poetical common-places, which were, so to speak, in the air and belonged to everybody.§

It is, then, in the eighth century before our era that all the inductions we have made lead us to place the composition of the book of Job. Rome did not yet exist; Greece had some harmonious songs, but had not yet learned to write; Egypt, Assyria, Iran (embraced in Bactriana), India, China were old already with revolutions, intellectual, political, and religious, when an unknown sage, remaining faithful to the spirit of ancient times, wrote for humanity this sublime disputation, in which the afflictions and the scruples of all ages might find so eloquent an expression.

II.

WE must now examine whether the poem is entirely by one hand, and whether it has remained free from those successive additions to which works somewhat ancient—especially when they do not possess a rigorous unity and a well circum-

* Proverbs xxv. 1.

† Isaiah xxxviii. 10 *et seq.*

‡ Compare especially Job xiv. 11 with Isaiah xix. 5. It appears plainly that the one author has copied the other; but it is impossible to say on which side the borrowing has taken place. I nevertheless think with Kueper, as against Hitzig, that Isaiah was the imitator.

§ It is in like manner that we must explain the numerous approximations which are to be observed between the poem of Job and certain of the Psalms.

scribed plan—have rarely escaped. Even a superficial perusal of the book of Job suffices to reveal that this book, so grandiose in its *ensemble*, is far from presenting in detail a satisfactory arrangement. The parts in prose do not accord perfectly with the parts in verse. Some passages repeat or contradict one another; long parentheses interrupt here and there the most beautiful *morceaux*; finales without force destroy sometimes the effect of the most happy movements. The idea of interpolation presents itself to explain these blemishes, which, from our point of view, is incompatible with the marvellous art discovered in the general composition of the work and in the finished turns of some of its parts. One circumstance, however, ought, when inductions of this nature are under discussion, to inspire a certain degree of caution. The Hebrews and the Orientals in general have, in regard to composition, very different ideas from ours. Their works have never possessed that perfect, definite form to which we are accustomed, and we must sometimes be on our guard in discovering what seem to us interpolations and changes in passages where the lack of sequence astonishes us. Thus, after having replied to his three friends, Job twice takes up speech consecutively. Elihu answers four times, and each of his discourses has an exordium and a peroration. Jehovah himself delivers two discourses. At first glance these seem successive additions: and, in fact, these parabolic developments, which follow no rigorous method, are indulged in to such an extent that the temptation is ever present to carry them still further by new amplifications. But, on reflection, one hesitates to draw this consequence. The discourses of Elihu, in particular, are certainly by the same hand, and all the discourses of Job, except in some short passages which we

would like to obliterate—for example, the last verses of Chapter iii. and Chapter xix., some incidental phrases of Chapter xxxi., where two compilations seem to have interpenetrated—are examples of such an exalted character and of force that we cannot doubt that they were the fruit of a single inspiration. We might add that the ore of poetry itself is hardly adequate to the recital of that sublime protestation against the persecution of the just.

Four principal portions have, with more or less reason, excited the suspicions of critics in the book of Job: 1st, the prologue and the epilogue; 2nd, the passage which extends from Chap. xxvii. 7 to the end of Chap. xxviii.; 3rd, the description of the crocodile and the hippopotamus at the end of the discourse of Jehovah; 4th, and finally, the whole of the discourse of Elihu.

There can be no question that the ideas of the prologue and the epilogue are in many respects in contradiction with those of the poem. Job is presented in the prologue and the epilogue as a model of patience; his misfortunes cannot extort from him a word of blasphemy; his whole speech is full of a humble submission to the divine will. On the other hand, no sooner does he “take up his parable,” that is to say, no sooner does he commence to speak in verse, than his language becomes arrogant, audacious, and almost blasphemous. The prologue appeared at a pious epoch, and one strongly addicted to the worship of Jehovah; the poem, on the contrary, supposes an epoch of very great religious freedom. The critical mind of the nomad, his simple religion, are there revealed at each step. The only names of God which figure in the poem are the names El, Shaddai, Eloah, which are equally to be found among the other Semitic peoples. In the epilogue, finally (xlvi. 7), God gives

Job full credit, and acknowledges that he has spoken well of Him, whilst in the poem He severely reprimands Job* and taxes him with levity.

Whatever may be the force of these reasons, I do not consider them sufficient to separate two parts of a work so closely related to each other. The poem is intelligible without the prologue and epilogue. If some features of these two fragments seem to breathe a religion much advanced as regards the sentiments, others, on the contrary, presuppose a worship of great simplicity. It is hard to admit that in an epoch of intellectual decline, like as was that of Jeremiah and of Josiah, people knew how to feign so skilfully the exterior forms of a wholly individual religion, and to reproduce patriarchal manners with so much *finesse*. The grand character of the narrative is likewise a proof of its antiquity: when one compares with that admirable style the tone of the modern legends of Tobias, Judith, Esther, and Daniel, one feels the difference. As to the exclusive employment of the name of Jehovah in the prologue and epilogue, one cannot conclude thence against the authenticity of these two fragments. We find again, in fact, the name of Jehovah outside the prologue and epilogue in the short formulas which denote the changes of the interlocutors,† and which certainly have not been interpolated.

The motives for rejecting the authenticity of the second part of Chap. ...xvii.‡ are still less decisive. It is most true that the principles enunciated in that place by Job are in contradiction with those which he maintains elsewhere; as I have above stated, we must not look for rigorous logic in these

* Chapter xxxviii. (Vulgate xxxix.) 32, xl. 2.

† Chapter xxxviii. 1; xl. 1, 3, 6 (Vulgate xxxix. 31, 33; xl. 1); xlvi. 1.

‡ See De Wette, *Einleitung*, § 288.

old writings. Several critics, since Kennicott, have believed that this passage was wrongly put into the mouth of Job, and that we ought to regard it as the third discourse of Sophar, who, as we know, spoke one time less than his two friends. It is certain that the whole of this part of the book appears badly enough confused. I would willingly admit some transposition or error in this place; but it is not proved that there has been some subsequent addition made here. It is contrary to all probability that M. Bernstein attributes Chap. xxviii., one of the most beautiful developments of the poem, to the author of the discourse of Elihu.

The opinion of M. Ewald, who regards as interpolations the descriptions of Behemoth and of the Leviathan,* does not rest any more securely upon solid foundations. It is true that the discourse of Jehovah would finish very well at Chap. xl. 14, and that the description of these two monsters has a very different character from the charming and naïve natural history of Chap. xxxix. It is true, further, that the relation of v. 4 of Chap. xli. is so slight that one is disposed to regard it as a second addition which should have been joined directly to the first, because in this view there would have been no occasion to make a halt. But I repeat that we must be careful in seeking to discover in these antique works our precepts of composition and taste. The style of the fragment in question is that of the best of any in the poem. There is no part where the emphasis is more marked, the parallelism more sonorous; everything indicates that this singular fragment is by the same hand, but not from the same shoot, as the rest of the discourse of Jehovah.

* Chapter xl. 15 (Vulgate 10), xli.

It is against the single discourse of Elihu that the greatest, and, in my opinion, most successful* difficulties have been raised. Not only, in fact, does this discourse disturb the order of the poem, since it is nothing but a repetition of what has preceded, and which enfeebles beforehand the effect of the discourse of God, but also the interpolator has taken so little pains to conceal his addition that the entry and the exit of Elihu are in direct contradiction with the rest of the work. In the prologue, in fact, which is preparatory to the drama and in which the personages are named, there is no mention made of this new interlocuter; the author of the interpolation is obliged, in order to account for his unexpected appearance, to give a retrospective explanation (xxxi. 4). There is yet a more grave consideration. Jehovah, in taking up speech after the discourse of Elihu (xxxviii. 1), addresses his remarks to Job and apostrophises him, as though nobody had spoken since the end of the parables of Job (xxxii. 40). Finally, in the epilogue the three friends reappear in order to receive severe reprimands, and in all this there is not one word of Elihu, who, notwithstanding, merited as well as Eliphaz, Bildad, and Sophar the reproaches of God.

These considerations would of themselves alone constitute a very strong objection against the authenticity of the discourses of Elihu. But a still stronger proof is, in my opinion, to be drawn from the reading of the discourse itself. From the very first lines we are confronted with language

* This is also the opinion of Eickhorn, Stuhlmann, Bernstein, De Wette, Ewald, Hirzel, and Knobel. The authenticity is defended by Schäerer, Stædulin, Bertholdt, Jahn, Rosenmüller, Rembreit, Arnheim, and Stickel, but for paltry enough reasons, and setting out almost always with the idea that the whole of the poem was written at a very modern epoch.

very different from that of the rest of the poem. The vocabulary of the author is unusual; many words that he seems to affect are not to be found in the discourses of the other interlocutors, nor even in the rest of the Hebrew writings. Now, when it is a question of a language so unrestrained as the Hebrew, where each author has in some sort his distinctive vocabulary, the habits of style constitute a decisive criterion. The manner in which Elihu argues resembles no longer that of his three friends. He apostrophises Job by his name; he delights in long preambles; his philosophic precepts affect forms more abstract and suppose a much higher degree of reflection. Can it be said that the author has wished to emphasise thus the individuality of the part assumed by Elihu and his personal character? But the poetry of high antiquity is not conversant with those delicate shades of *characters*; it paints man and the grand poesy of life, which is the same for all. The idea of making each personage speak in a particular style is the sign of an art much advanced and even a characteristic of decadence. Again, the tone of the other parts of the book does not offer diversity; Job speaks in the same style as his friends, and his friends in the same style as Jehovah.

The æsthetic considerations are not less strong against the discourse of Elihu than are those which are furnished by the grammar. Although we have placed upon ourselves a certain reserve as to such inductions, yet the general features of the fragments we are treating of are so characteristic that we must not hesitate this once to speak out boldly. The style of Elihu is cold, heavy, and pretentious. The actor is lost in long descriptions which are destitute of vivacity,* the rather if we

* See p. 83 *et seq.*

compare them with the sagacious traits of the discourse of Jehovah. He sometimes permits his *katâm* to wander at hazard. The construction of certain passages (for example, xxxviii. 6 and 12) is altogether disjointed. His language is obscure, and presents difficulties of a peculiar order. In other parts of the poem the obscurity arises from our ignorance and from the slender means we possess to make us comprehend these antique documents. Here the obscurity proceeds from the style itself, from its caprice, and from its affectation.* Apart from some passages whose imperfection may be attributed to the defective manner in which the text has come down to us, the poem of Job is, in its essential parts, the model of parabolic eloquence. Here, on the contrary, we are in presence of one of those rare *morceaux* of Hebrew literature which we can, at least in certain places, tax with feebleness. The author imitates the preceding discourses, and even those of Jehovah which follow. At times he seems pre-occupied by a singular idea—to wit, of answering the questions propounded in the discourses of Jehovah.† Thus, the grand description of thunder (xxxvi. 27, xxxvii. 13) is only a somewhat flabby exposition of what is immediately afterwards presented with incomparable vigour in the interrogations of Jehovah.

The natural philosophy of Elihu, in fact, is in some respects more advanced than that of Chapter xxxviii. and those that follow. Jehovah, with patriarchal simplicity, asks, “Hath the rain a

* The experience of a translator is here an excellent means of discernment. In passing from the parables of Job to the discourses of Elihu one feels oneself abruptly transported from one world to another. The mental processes which it is necessary to employ in wrestling with this new style have nothing in common with those which are called into requisition to translate the rest of the poem.

† See Hirzel, *Hiob*. p. 231, &c.

father?" It was already known to Elihu that it was the emanations of waters which formed the clouds, and fell again afterwards upon the multitude of mortals (xxxvi. 27, 28). His philosophy is likewise more matured and fixed than that of Job and of his three friends; his moral ideas are more subtle; but the afflatus of genius was completely lacking in him. Such a contradiction ought not to surprise: the book of *Wisdom* is certainly much more systematic and more abundant in theories than the ancient books of wisdom; and yet who would prefer it to the latter, whether as respects taste, inspiration, and *naïveté*?

I regard it then as certain that the discourses of Elihu were interpolated posteriorly to the epoch when the book of Job had attained the form in which we now have it. It is impossible to say whether this insertion followed closely the completion of the poem, or whether it was separated from it by a long interval. Such a style, savouring of imitation and, if I may say so, of pasticcio, has no date. At times one is tempted to believe that Hebrew had already ceased to be spoken at the epoch when the fragment in question was written, many of the expressions used in it being so little natural. We cannot say, however, that the general character of the style of Elihu is that of the writings of later epochs. His doctrines might appear more skilfully combined, and, consequently, more modern than those of the other interlocutors; but it would be difficult to say whether centuries were required to work this transformation. The progress of the reflection of a single man might have the precision requisite for that. Who can tell whether the author himself, taking up his work again after a long interval, at a period in his life when he had lost his *verve* and his style, believed that he could perfect his poem by adding

to it this fragment, which in reality disfigures it? Certain it is that the author of the addition did not attach any very great importance to it, since he did not, in order to justify it, give himself the trouble to make the simplest changes in the rest of the work.

The form in which writings of the nature of that of Job have been transmitted to us explains, moreover, these indecisions and incoherencies. It does not seem that the book of Job had at first, in the estimation of the Israelites, any very great importance. Not only did they not attribute to it (at the remote epoch in which it was written) any canonical authority, but it even seems that it had for some considerable time been held to be a fictitious and profane composition. Several rabbis of the middle ages, Balbag, for example, considered it as being nothing but a philosophical work, and treated it with the greatest freedom.* These sorts of texts were, in ancient times, not very strictly preserved. Each made his copy in his own fashion and according to his personal tastes. Diverse copies were often included in a single one, and the ball of snow was thus firmly incorporated with the gravel. I cannot better explain my meaning than by comparing this antique mode of compilation to that which, for example, is presented to us by certain popular books of the churches of the Orient and of Syria, and in particular by the pious romances founded upon the Old and New Testaments, designated under the name of Apocrypha. Being desirous to publish one of these writings,† I found as many texts as manu-

* See the incomplete edition of the Commentary of Rolbag, with the Latin translation by L. H. d'Aquin, Paris, 1622, vii.—4.

† *Asiatic Journal*, December, 1853. The later biblical books, which have never attained a very complete canonical consecration—Tobias, Judith, Esther, Daniel—present also a very uncertain compilation and many interpolations.

scripts. The one added to, the other took from ; the one was inexplicable without the other, and I recognised that, if it had rested only with a single manuscript, it would have been impossible, in many passages, to arrive at the true meaning of the author.

Such is our position, approximately, as regards the book of Job. This antique monument has, I am persuaded, in many places been handed down to us in a most miserable and emasculated condition. Many of the details which injure and diminish the most beautiful developments, some of the brusque ruptures which destroy the logical sequence of the discourse, arise, probably, from the great liberty taken by the copyists, a liberty over which, for several centuries, no control was exercised. The insurmountable difficulties which were here and there encountered in it are the symbols and the proof. Philology has done well in her struggle with these obscurities, and it must be acknowledged that it has considerably diminished the number of inscrutable passages, but it will for ever be reduced to the condition of resting its discoveries upon mere conjecture. There is but one remedy for such uncertainties—the discovery of a manuscript anterior to the epoch in which was fixed the reading which alone has reached us. It is useless to add that such a hope must be absolutely abandoned, since this determination of the text took place certainly before our era, and seeing that the Greek version called the Septuagint corresponds already verse for verse with the Hebrew text.

III.

IN order to comprehend the poem of Job, it is not sufficient to fix its date ; it must be restored by means of the sentiment of the race which created

it, and of which it is the most perfect expression. Nowhere do the aridity, the austerity, and the grandeur which characterised the original works of the Semitic race show themselves more nakedly. In this strange book there is not a moment in which one does not feel vibrate the fine and delicate touches which make the grand poetic creations of Greece and of India so perfect an imitation of nature; in it entire sides of the human soul are at fault; a kind of grandiose stiffness gives to the poem a hard aspect, which resembles a tone of brass. But never has the position, so eminently poetical, of man in this world, his mysterious struggle against an inimical power which he sees not, his alternatives justified equally by submission and revolt, inspired so eloquent a plaint. The grandeur of human nature consists in a contradiction which has struck all sages and has been the fruitful mother of all elevated thought and of all noble philosophy; on the one hand, conscience declaring right and duty to be supreme realities; on the other, the experiences of every day inflicting upon these profound aspirations inexplicable contradictions. Hence that sublime lamentation which has endured since the beginning of the world, and which to the end of time shall bear towards heaven the protestations of the moral man. The poem of Job is the most sublime expression of that cry of the soul. In it blasphemy approximates the hymn, or rather is itself a hymn, since it is only an appeal to God against the lacunæ which conscience finds in the work of God. The pride of the nomad, his religion, at once cold, severe, and far removed from all devotion, his haughty personality, can alone explain that singular mixture of exalted faith and of audacious obstinacy.

The imagination of the Semitic peoples never goes beyond the narrow circle which has traced

around it the exclusive preoccupation of the divine grandeur. God and man, face to face with one another in the heart of the desert, is the summary and, as we say in our day, the formula of all their poetics. The Semites* are ignorant of the species of poesy founded upon the development of action, the epic, the drama, and the species of speculation based upon the experimental or rational method, philosophy or science. Their poesy is the song; their philosophy is the parable.† The period rendered their style defective, just as reasoning did their thoughts. With them enthusiasm, as well as reflection, found expression in vivid and concise details, in which we must not look for anything approximating the oratorical numbers of the Greeks and Latins. The poem of Job is unquestionably the most ancient masterpiece of that rhetoric of which the Koran is, on the contrary, the example the nearest approaching to ours. We must renounce all comparison between processes so far removed from our liking and the grave, closely-knit texture of classical works. Action, the regular progression of thought, which are the soul of Greek compositions, are wanting here completely. But a vividness of imagination, a force of concentrated passion, to which there is nothing that can be compared, fly off, if I may so speak, in millions of sparks and make of each line a discourse or a complete philosophic theme.

* I speak here of the Semites, primitively nomads, Hebrews, Moabites, Edomites, Saracens, Ishmaelites, Arabs, &c., with whose mental characteristics (thanks to the religious and poetic works which they have bequeathed to us) we are best acquainted. The "Song of Songs" presents indeed a commencement of lyric drama, but scarcely developed. It is doubtful, notwithstanding the ingenious reasonings of M. Ewald, whether that curious libretto has ever been represented.

† I employ here and in the translation the word "parable" not in the special sense we give to it, but as the equivalent of the Hebrew word *maschal*, which designates the sententious poetry of the books entitled "Wisdom," in opposition to the word *schir*, which designates the "Songs" and the lyric poetry.

Above all it is the manner in which the author of the book of Job conducts his argument which astonishes us and betrays most unmistakably the characteristics of his race. Abstract relations, in the Semitic languages, can be expressed only with the greatest difficulty. The embarrassment which Hebrew presents in the statement of the most simple argument is quite surprising. The form of the dialogue which, in the hands of Socrates, was for the Greek mind so admirable an instrument of precision, is never used in the former to conceal the defects of a rigorous method. From one end of the poem to the other the question in dispute is not advanced a single step. There is not a trace of that, though often subtle, yet always singularly importunate *dialectic*, the model of which is presented to us in the dialogues of Plato and in the *Soutras* of Buddhism. The author, like all Semites, has no conception of the beauties of composition which result from a severe discipline of the mind. He proceeds by vivid intuitions, not by inductions. An insoluble problem is proposed; an immense exercise of thought is expended in order to resolve it. God must in the end appear, not as in the classic drama, to unravel the enigma, but by the employment of even more brilliant instances, to demonstrate its insolvable depth.

Far be it from us to think of demanding from these books of antiquity the qualities we owe to the most insignificant of ours. If they strike us as being the revelation of another world, if they convey to our souls that profound emotion which carries with it the first and innocent expression of all great thought, is not that enough to explain the admiration of ages, and to justify the enthusiasm which has decreed to them the application of sacred? One circumstance, however, transforms the defect of method which offends the logician in

the book of Job into a sublime beauty. If the question was one accessible to the human mind, it would shock one to see the rules of scientific investigation so grossly violated. But the question which the author proposes to himself is precisely that which every thinker asks himself, without being able to answer it: embarrassments, uneasiness, that fashion of turning over in every sense the fatal obstacle without finding in it the issue, contains much more philosophy than the trenchant scholastic, who pretends to impose silence on the doubts raised by reason in rejoinders of apparent perspicacity. Contradiction in such matters is an evidence of truth, for the little which has been revealed to man in regard to the plan of the universe is reduced to a few curves and projections, the fundamental law of which is not clearly understood and which extends into depths of infinity. To maintain in presence of both the eternal aspirations of the heart, the affirmations of the moral sentiment, the protests of conscience, the testimony of reality—this is wisdom. The general sentiment of the book of Job is therefore one of perfect truth. It is the grandest lesson which has been given to intemperate dogmatism, and to the pretensions of the superficial mind which has become imbued with theology; it is in a sense the highest result of all philosophy, for it signifies that man has but veiled his face in presence of the infinite problem which the government of the world opens to his meditations. The hypocritical pietism of Eliphaz and the bold intuitions of Job are equally at a loss to explain such an enigma; God himself has been careful not to reveal the secret, and, instead of explaining the universe to man, He has contented Himself with showing what a small place man occupies in the universe.

The complete absence of the scientific instinct is

one of the features which characterise the Semitic peoples. The investigation of causes is in their eyes either a vain occupation, of which they soon grow weary (*Ecclesiastes i.-iii.*), or an impiety, a usurpation of the rights of God (*Job xxxviii.-xli.*) Hence it is that the Jewish mind, though powerful by its very simplicity and persistence, has produced so few great philosophic speculations. Monotheism, in holding man under the continual thought of his impotence, and above all by excluding metaphysics and mythology, excluded by the same stroke all theology the least refined. The theory of the first principles of the universe (forces, ideas, &c.) is, in its way, a sort of polytheism, and it would be possible to demonstrate that metaphysics was only developed from the bosom of religions which were imitations proceeding from the Semitic race and contrary to the spirit of those religions. The system of the world, as set forth in the book of *Job*, is one of the simplest. God, creator of the universe and universal agent of the universe, has put life into all beings by breathing on them, and produced directly the whole phenomena of nature. Around are ranged as a court the sons of God, beings holy and pure, among whom, however, there has stolen in a jealous detractor of the universe, who denies the existence of disinterested virtue and persecutes the good. For the rest, there is no speculation in regard to celestial beings; a single metaphor more coherent than the others and giving scope to a rich development (*Chap. xxviii.*) was pregnant of the future: I mean of that pompous description of Wisdom, regarded as a primordial, having a distinct personality from that of divinity and serving as an assessor to it; such is the true Semitic foundation upon which the theories of the Word some centuries later became grafted.

Nature, in such a system, could only be con-

ceived as absolutely inanimate. In place of the living nature which spoke so powerfully to the imagination of the ancestors of the Indo-European race, here it is God who made all, in pursuance of a plan conceived by Himself alone. Some lively images, such as *the first born from the dead, the king of terrors* (xvii. 13, 14),* recall at first glance the personifications of Greece and of India: one fancies one is reading the *Vedas* in seeing Aurora (xxxviii. 13, 14), seizing the four corners of the earth in order to chase the wicked, and to change the face of the world as the seal changes the *terra sigillata* (fine clay).† But all this continued fruitless. With the Arians these attributes of Aurora had become an act or an adventure of a goddess. Then in time, ceasing to be understood, there were produced some whimsical stories in which the caprice of the poets had changed. It had, as I suppose, been related that Schahar (Aurora) was a vigorous young woman, who one day encountered brigands dividing their booty on a carpet, seized the four corners of it, and killed them. People then sought for in this narrative, which was interpreted with indefinite latitude, matter for dramas, allegories, and literary compositions of every kind. Amongst the Hebrews these bold figures never went beyond the metaphor. God promptly extinguished in their germ these fantastic creations, which, nevertheless, proceeded in multitudes from a language full of life, fructified by an imagination which was not confined by dogma. When one has closely penetrated the genius of these primitive Arian languages, one finds that each sentence embraces a myth, and that each element of exterior nature was inevitably

* There are doubts as regards the second of these expressions.

† Rigvédá I. cxxiii. 4: "Aurora draws near every house; it is she who announces each day. Aurora, the active young maiden, returns perpetually; she always enjoys the first of everything, goods, &c."

destined to become for the peoples which spoke them a divinity.* Meteorological phenomena especially, which play so capital a part in the primitive religions, because, in this order of phenomena, the immediate cause of them completely escapes observation, were a fruitful source of divine beings. There is nothing resembling this in the book of Job. The clouds, and all that is above them, are the dwelling-place and the special domain of one single being which thence governs everything. They are his reservoirs, his arsenals, the pavilions in which he resides.† Thence he regulates the storms and makes use of them at his good pleasure for purposes of recompense or of chastisement. The thunderstorm, in particular, has always been regarded as a theophany: it signals the descent of God upon the earth: the roll of thunder is the voice of God; lightning is His luminary; electric flashes are the shafts darted by His hands.

It is useless to mention that we would have to seek not less vainly in that antique poem for a trace of the grand Grecian idea, which was born in Ionia and destined to become in modern times the basis of all philosophy: we mean the idea of the *laws of nature*. In the former the miracle is everything; everything breathes that facile admiration (the joyous gift of infancy) which peoples the world with marvels and enchantments. Thales and Heraclites, one or two centuries after the book of Job, would have smiled at the artless questions by

* See the small treatise of Max Müller, entitled "Comparative Mythology," translated in part in the *Germanic Review*, June and July, 1858.

† See especially the end of the discourse of Elihu (p. 159 *et seq.*), which may be regarded as a true exposition of Semitic meteorology. The manner in which all these natural phenomena are related, in this curious passage, to God as their sole agent, by means of the pronoun affixed to the third person, is singularly striking.

which Jehovah thought to reduce to silence the aspirations of man to know the laws of the world. Nowhere more than here is the diversity of the Arian and the Semitic genius to be more keenly felt; the former was predestined by its primitive conception of nature and by the very form of its language to polytheism, mythology, metaphysics and physics, while the latter was condemned never to go beyond the barren and grandiose simplicity of monotheism. Even in our own day the Mussulman possesses no clearer ideas of the laws of nature than did the author of the book of Job; and the principal motive of reprobation which the sincere believers in Islamism raise against European science* is that the latter ignores the power of God, by reducing the government of the universe to a play of forces which are susceptible of being calculated.

Thus, between the cosmogonies founded upon abstract principles, and the scientific physics of the Greeks and of modern nations, the theory of the world which is contained in the book of Job is the most complete form of the order of nature rigorously deduced from monotheism. There can be no science of the world as long as the world is governed by the individual will of a capricious and impenetrable sovereign. From this point of view ignorance is a cult and curiosity a wicked attempt: even in presence of a mystery which assails and ruins him, man attributes in a special manner the character of grandeur to that which is inexplicable; all phenomena whose cause is hidden, all beings whose end cannot be perceived, are to man a humiliation and a motive for glorifying God. Greece saw the divine in that which was harmonious and evident; the Semite saw God in that which was monstrous and obscure.

* See the narrative of the Scheik Rifaa, analysed by M. Causin de Perceval, in the *Asiatic Journal*, March, 1833, pp. 242, 243.

The deformed Leviathan is the most beautiful hymn to the Eternal. The animal, with its hidden instincts, is constantly contrasted with man, and is even preferred to him; for it is more directly under the dependence of the divine spirit which acts in it without it, whilst reflective reason and freedom are in some sort a larceny committed upon God.

The theory of the moral world, which is made use of as a basis in the book of Job, is not less innocent. Man is in perpetual and direct relations with the Divinity: he sometimes beholds it, but only to die. At other times the Divinity speaks with him in dreams and in visions. Again it warns him by the ordinary events in life. The difference between the good and the bad is the result of a *path* which God has traced and which He reveals to man. God, in like manner, recompenses the good and punishes the bad. Again, man dies *when his time has come*, and descends into hell without his perceiving it. The wicked, on the contrary, die *before their time*. All violent deaths, all prolonged and cruel sickness, were thus regarded as punishments for concealed wickedness. The dictionary itself is strongly opposed to that which another doctrine prides itself in. The words *crime*, *chastisement*, *pain*, *suffering*, *injustice*, *evil*, are, in Hebrew, almost identical, and the translator who has struggled at almost every step against the difficulties which surround such words as לְפָעָה, נִזְבָּה, אֲשֶׁר, understands better than any one else the impossibility which the Hebrew mind had in arriving (with such a confusion in words) at a distinction that we regard as the principle of all morality.

Such is the system that I shall denominate patriarchal, and upon which the book of Job reposes. We perceive at the very outset the objections to which such a system must lend itself

the moment that reflection becomes the least exacting, and is no longer satisfied with the naïve explanations of the early ages. Some of the impious, at the epoch of the book of Job, were already bold enough to say, like the Epicurean, that God interfered little in the affairs of this world, and "that He walked up and down upon the vault of heaven." Above all, an insurmountable objection resulted from the spectacle presented by society. The old theory, that each is treated by God here below according to his deserts, might have been sustainable in that noble and venerable antiquity which the aged Samuel essayed vainly to defend against the new requirements which were every day springing up from all parts. In this Eden of the life patriarchal, in which nobleness, wealth, and power were inseparable, the theory of the friends of Job was applied almost rigorously. But this theory, which possessed some reality in an aristocracy of honest men, such as was the primitive society of the Semite nomads, became more and more insupportable in proportion as the Semitic world, up till now very pure, in the environs of Palestine, drifted into the ways of profane civilisation, and which happened about the year 1000 before our era. We see then the wicked prosperous, tyrants recompensed, brigands conveyed with honours to the tomb, the just despoiled and reduced to beg for their bread. The nomad, remaining faithful to his patriarchal ideas, was not deserving of the fatal injustices which were brought in the train of a complicated civilisation whose extent and aim he did not comprehend. The cry of the *poor*, which before had not been heard—for the poor only existed among the inferior races to which was hardly accorded the name of man*—

* See Job xxx. 3—8. The existence of these races at the time of the composition of our poem is worthy of being remarked. We know

began to resound everywhere in accents full of eloquence and passion.

We can conceive the perplexity of the ancient sages in the presence of an inexplicable phenomenon which henceforth presented itself every day. The Semitic mind until now had been bounded by a theory as to the destiny of man of marvellous simplicity. Man, after death, descended to Sheol, a subterranean abode, which is often difficult to distinguish from the tomb, and where the dead preserved a vague existence, analogous to the Manes of Greek and Latin antiquity, and especially to that of the Shades of the *Odyssey*. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, which might have offered an immediate and easy solution to the perplexities we are speaking of, had not for once been mooted, at least in the philosophic and moral sense which we give to it;* the resurrection of the body was only entertained in the most indecisive manner. Death did not call forth any idea of sadness, when the hour came when a man should rejoin his fathers and when he left behind him numerous children. In this respect no difference existed between the Hebrews and the other peoples of remote antiquity. The narrow horizon which bounded life left no room for our uneasy aspirations and our thirst for the infinite. But the mind of every one was troubled when catastrophes such that they do not figure again in the history of Israel after the epoch of David. In the ethnological table of chapter x. of *Genesis* it is not to be inferred that they had ceased to exist when that table was compiled, but because the Hebrews, like the Brahmins of India, regarded the people belonging to these races rather as animals than as men, and were unwilling to give them a place in the great families of humanity.

* See Isidore Cahen, "Sketch of the Philosophy of the Book of Job," p. 66, at the head of the volume consecrated to the book of Job in the "Bible" of M. Cahen. See in the same work the "Reflections upon the Worship of the Ancient Hebrews" of M. Munk, placed at the head of the volume of "Numbers," and the observations of M. Cahen in the preface of the same volume (p. i., ii., 10 *et seq.*, 2nd edition).

as that of Job were recounted in the text, up till then free from such stumbling-blocks. The whole of the old philosophy of the fathers was upset; the sages of Teman, whose leading precept was that man received here below his recompense or his punishment, was entertained by backward minds; in presence of such misfortunes they could only weep in silence for a space of seven days and seven nights.

The book of Job is the expression of the incurable trouble which seized the conscience at the epoch when the old patriarchal theory, based exclusively upon the promises of the life terrestrial, became insufficient. The author perceives the weakness of this theory; he is, with good reason, shocked at the crying injustice which an artificial interpretation of the decrees of Providence brings with it; but he can discover no outlet from the closed circle from which man can only free himself by a bold appeal to the future. His attempts to shake off the ancient prejudices of the race are powerless, or only land him in perpetual contradictions. Some partisans of the old theory, constrained by the evidence of facts, avowed that man is not always punished during his life; but they also maintained that his sins were visited upon his children, who, according to the patriarchal ideas in regard to the solidarity of the tribe, were in some sort himself. The author does not accept this idea; for, as such a punishment might be efficacious, it was imperative that the guilty should be sought out; but in *shcol* nothing is known of what takes place on earth.* At times Job seems to lift the veil from his future beliefs; he hopes that God will assign him a place by himself in hell where he may rest in peace until he shall return to life; † he knows that he will be avenged,

* See p. 34.

† See pp. 32, 33.

and, the lively intuition of the justice of the future carrying him beyond, he declares that in his flesh he shall see God.* But these flashes are always followed by the most profound darkness. The old patriarchal conception returns and presses upon him with its whole weight; the spectacle of the misery of man, the tardy destruction of nature, that horrible indiscriminateness of death which strikes down without distinction the just and the wicked, the happy man and the unfortunate,† brought him back to the verge of despair. In the epilogue he falls back again, purely and simply, into the theory which for a moment he has essayed to surpass. Job is avenged; his fortune is restored to him two-fold; he dies old and full of days.

It must be said that the Jewish mind abandoned to itself has never completely broken through that fatal circle. The poem of Job is not the only monument into which inquietude and embarrassment have entered—the inevitable consequences of the imperfection of Jewish ideas as to the final end. Two psalms, the 37th and the 73rd, express with much vivacity ‡ a thought greatly analogous to that of the book of Job, the jealousy and indignation of the good in beholding the success of the wicked. An entire book, the date of which is uncertain—*Koheleth*, or *Ecclesiastes*—revolves in the same circle of contradictions, yet seems much further from a moral solution. The author of the book of Job found a solution of his doubts in a pure and simple return to the precepts of the ancient sages. *Ecclesiastes* is much more deeply tainted by

* See p. 44. It is well to observe that the passage cited often, “In nonissimo die de terra surrecturus sum,” does not conform to the Hebrew text. The verb in the Hebrew is in the third person, and the literal would be, “Et denique super terram stabet” (vindex meus).

† See pp. 49, 50.

‡ xxxvi. and lxxii. in the Vulgate. Compare also Proverbs xxiv. 19 *et seq.*

scepticism. He ends in a sort of epicurism, fatalism, and a disgust for great things. But this was in the destiny of Israel only a temporary accident, the result of a few isolated thinkers. The destiny of Israel did not solve the problem of the individual soul, but boldly laid down the problem of humanity. Moreover, the doubts of *Ecclesiastes* and of Job preoccupied only the people at the moments when it had no very clear perception of its duties. There is no trace of such a doubt amongst the prophets. We find it only amongst the *sages*, who were almost strangers to the great theocratic spirit and to the universal mission of Israel.

At the epochs themselves in which the Jews imposed their thoughts on the world, can we say that it was through philosophic immortality that they consoled man, and raised him to the heroism of the martyr? Certainly not. Resurrection was to them, not individual revenge against the injustices of the present life, but revolution which should substitute, for the brutal powers that be, the reign of a celestial and pacific Jerusalem. It was the hope of a final overthrow which should herald the advent of *the kingdom of God upon the earth*, by which Christianity has conquered the world.* In this, nascent Christianity really continued the tradition of Israel. The Utopia of Israel did not consist in creating a world to make compensation and reparation to the latter, but to change the conditions of the latter. It was when this grandiose dream had vanished before the obstinate prolongation of the old world, and that the immediate renewal of the universe could not be expected

* The dogma of the immortality of the soul in the philosophic sense does not appear until quite late in Christianity, and has never been reconciled in a very natural manner with the primitive Christian idea—the idea of the resurrection.

until millenniums later, that people transferred to personal judgment and to the destinies of the individual soul that which hitherto had been understood as a total and immediate renovation of humanity.

Certainly, at first sight, it seems inexplicable that men of the world who were the most imbued with the sacred fire of their work—a David, an Elias, an Isaiah, a Jeremiah—had not, in regard to the future of man, the system of ideas which we are accustomed to consider as the basis of all religious belief. But it was in this very thing that the grandeur of Israel manifested itself. Israel has done better than to invent for the gratification of its imagination a distinct system of future rewards and pains; she has discovered the true solution for great souls; she has resolutely cut the knot which she could not unravel. She has cut it by action, by the obstinate pursuit of her idea, and by the most unbounded ambition that has ever possessed the hearts of a people. There are problems which cannot be solved, but which can be passed over. That of the destiny of humanity belongs to this class. The former would destroy whatever impeded it. It alone has succeeded in discovering the secret of life which can quench inward sadness, dispense with hopes, silence those enervating doubts which attach only to feeble souls and to degenerate epochs. What matters recompense when the work is so engaging that it embraces within itself the promises of eternity?

Three thousand years have passed over the problem agitated by the sages of Idumea, and, in spite of the progress of the philosophic method, we cannot say that it has advanced a step towards solution. Regarded from the point of view of individual recompenses and chastisements, this world will continue to be a subject of eternal dis-

putation, and God will always give the direct lie to the maladroit apologists who would defend Providence upon that desperate basis. The sorrow which the Psalmist experienced in *witnessing the peace of sinners*, the anger of Job against the prosperity of the impious, are sentiments justified in all times. But that which neither the Psalmist nor Job could comprehend, that which the succession of schools, the mixture of races, a long education of the moral sense could alone reveal, we have learned; beyond this chimerical justice that the superficial common sense of all ages has sought to discover in the government of the universe we perceive laws and direction much more exalted, without the knowledge of which human affairs would only seem a tissue of iniquities. The future of the individual man has not become more clear, and perhaps it is best that an eternal veil should cover the verities which are of no value save where they are the fruit of a pure heart. But a word which neither Job nor his friends uttered has acquired a sublime meaning and value; that word is duty, which, with its incalculable philosophic consequences, is imposed upon all, resolves all doubts, conciliates all opposition, and serves as a basis for re-edifying that which reason destroys or allows to crumble away. Thanks to this neither equivocal nor obscure revelation, we affirm that he who shall choose the good will be the true sage. The latter shall be immortal, for his works will live, if definitive justice be a *résumé* of the divine work which has been accomplished by humanity. Humanity made the divine like as the spider weaves his web; the march of the world is enveloped in darkness, but it tends towards God. Whilst the foolish or frivolous wicked man shall wholly perish, in the sense that he shall leave

nothing behind in the general result of the labour of his species, the man devoted to the good and the beautiful shall participate in the immutability of that which he loved. Who is he that sees to-day as much as the obscure Galilean who, eighteen hundred years ago, threw into the world the glaive which divides us and the words which unite us? The works of the man of genius and of the man of probity thus escape alone the universal decay, for they alone are computed in the sum of things acquired, and their fruits go on increasing, even when ungrateful humanity has forgotten them. There is nothing lost; that which makes for the good of the most unknown of virtuous men counts more in the eternal balance than the most insolent triumphs of error and of evil. Whatever form he gives to his beliefs, whatever symbol he employs to invest his affirmations of the future, the just man has thus the right to say with the old patriarch of Idumea, "Yes, I know that my avenger liveth, and that he shall appear at the latter day upon the earth."

JO B.

PROLOGUE.

THERE was in the land of Uz a man named Job. This man was upright, honest, fearing God and eschewing evil.

And there were born to him seven sons and three daughters, and he possessed seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred pairs of oxen, five hundred she-asses, and numerous servants ; and this man was the greatest of Orientals.

And his sons were accustomed to go to one another's houses and to give a repast, every one on his day ; and they sent messengers to invite their three sisters to come to eat and to drink with them.

And when the round of the feast was ended, Job sent for them, purified them, and offered the

morning burnt-sacrifice for each of them, for he said, "Perhaps my sons have sinned, and have forsaken God in their hearts." Thus did Job every day of his life.

Now, it happened that one day, the sons of God being come to present themselves before Jehovah, Satan came also in the midst of them.

And Jehovah said to Satan, "Whence comest thou?"

And Satan answered Jehovah, "From surveying the world, and from walking about in it."

And Jehovah said to Satan, "Hast thou remarked my servant Job? There is no man like him upon the earth, upright, honest, fearing God and eschewing evil."

And Satan answered Jehovah, "Is it for nothing that Job fears God? Hast not thou made a line of defence around him, around his house, around all that appertains to him? Hast not thou blessed the work of his hands, and his flocks do not they spread on all sides upon the earth? But put forth thy hand, touch his goods, and we shall see whether he will not abjure thee to thy face."

And Jehovah said to Satan, "I deliver up to

thee all that which belongs to him: only do not put forth thy hand upon his person."

And Satan withdrew himself from before the presence of Jehovah.

Now it chanced that one day, while his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking in the house of their eldest brother, a messenger came to Job and said to him, "The oxen were busy at work, the she-asses were grazing beside them: suddenly the Sabeans came down unexpectedly and carried them forcibly away. They have put the slaves to the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped to make it known to thee."

He was still speaking when another arrived and said, "The fire of God is fallen from Heaven; it has struck the flocks and the slaves, and has consumed them, and I only am escaped to make it known to thee."

He was still speaking when another arrived and said, "The Chaldeans formed into three bands, fell upon the camels and carried them forcibly away. They have put the slaves to the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped to make it known to thee."

While he was yet speaking another arrived and said, "Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking in the house of their eldest brother. And behold, a great wind arose on the other side of the desert; it shook the four corners of the house, which fell upon the young people: and they are dead, and I only am escaped to make it known to thee."

And Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and he prostrated himself on the earth, and worshipped, and said, "Naked came I from the womb of my mother, and naked shall I return thither: Jehovah has given everything, Jehovah has taken everything from me: let the name of Jehovah be blessed!"

In all this Job did not sin, nor did he utter any blasphemy against God.

Now it chanced that one day, the sons of God being come to present themselves before Jehovah, Satan came also in the midst of them to present himself before Jehovah.

And Jehovah said to Satan, "Whence comest thou?"

And Satan answered Jehovah, "From surveying the world and from walking about in it."

And Jehovah said to Satan, "Hast thou remarked my servant Job? There is no man like him upon the earth, upright, honest, fearing God and eschewing evil. He perseveres still in his piety, and thou hast provoked me to ruin him without cause."

And Satan answered Jehovah, "Skin for skin, a man gives all that he possesses for his own person. But put forth thy hand, touch his bone and his flesh, and we shall see whether he will not abjure thee to thy face."

And Jehovah said to Satan, "I put him in thy hand; only respect his life."

And Satan withdrew himself from before the presence of Jehovah.

And he struck Job with a malignant leprosy from the soles of the feet to the head, and Job, seated upon ashes, was obliged to scrape himself with a potsherd.

And his wife said to him, "What! perseverest thou still in thy piety? Forsake God, and die."

And he said to her, "You have just spoken like an insane woman. We have received good from God; how can we refuse to receive evil?"

In all this Job sinned not with his lips.

And three friends of Job, Eliphaz of Teman, Bildad of Suah, and Sophar of Naama, having learned of the misfortunes which had fallen upon him, departed each from his country, and agreed to go to him to offer their condolence and to console him.

And, having lifted up their eyes from afar, they could hardly recognise him, and they raised their voices and wept, and rent their mantles, and they threw dust towards Heaven in such a manner that it fell upon their heads. And they remained seated beside him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and none of them dared to address a word to him, because they saw that his grief was great.

Then Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth.

P O E M.

LET the day perish wherein I was born,
And the night which told of a man being formed !

May that day be changed into darkest gloom,
May God send it light no more from on high,
May the sun cease to shine with its rays !

Let the darkness and shadows enshroud it,
Let heavy mists press it down like a cloud,
And eclipses fill up the measure of horrors !

Let that night be the prey of a darkling terror,
Let it be reckoned no more in the year,
Nor counted a night in the lists of the month.

May that night be barren * for aye and for ever,
And no one hear in it the glad cry of joy !

Let the cursing enchanters † curse those days,
The cursing enchanters ruling the dragon ! ‡

* That is to say, Let no one be born on that day.

† Enchanters who were supposed to have the power of making certain days unlucky by uttering curses against them, as Job was then doing.

‡ The celestial dragon which almost all mythological astronomies of the East represent as ready to dart forth and devour the sun and the moon. It was supposed that the magicians had power to make it rise, and so produce the eclipses.

May their morning stars remain ever darkened,
May they wait for light, and the light never come,
Let them not see the eyelids of the dawn !

That the womb which bare me had been closed,
That she who brought forth had been spared pain !

Would I had died at my mother's breast,
And ceased to breathe when she was in throes !

Why did they take me on the double knees,
And allure me to suckle at the double breasts ?

Now I shall be put to bed and rest ;
I shall sleep in profoundest of peace.

With the kings and magnates of earth,
Who build themselves stately tombs.

With the princes who possess gold,
And fill their houses with silver.

Like a birth premature I shall not exist ;
Like children who never have seen the light.

There * do the wicked cease their violence,
There the exhausted man finds rest.

There does the prisoner live in quiet,
There he hears not the oppressor's voice.

* In the world of the dead, a subterranean resting-place, conceived according to the analogy of sepulchral caves, and where the dead were supposed to maintain the same relations as they had had during life.

There do the proud and the humble meet,
 There the slave as his master is free.
 Why is light to the unfortunate given ?
 Why life to him whose soul is filled with bitterness ?
 Who long for death when death will not come,
 Who seek it more ardently than for hidden treasure.
 Who are happy indeed and leap for joy
 And rejoice much when they find their grave.
 The paths of man are hidden in darkness,
 God has surrounded them with a fatal circle.
 My sighs are become to me like bread,
 And my groans overwhelm me like water.
 I cannot make out the fear which oppresses me ;
 All the misfortunes I dread are heaped upon me.
 More safety—more rest—more peace,
 Fresh torments without cessation.

Then Eliphaz of Teman began to speak, and said :—

If we break silence perchance we shall pain thee,
 But who can refrain from speaking ?
 Thou thyself hast taught wisdom to many,
 Thou hast given strength to the weak-handed.
 Thy words have raised those who were tottering,
 Thou hast strengthened the weak-kneed man.
 Now, giving way to misfortune, thou art troubled ;
 Afflicted with pain, thou art discouraged.

Has, then, thy piety no hope at all in it?
Hast thou no trust in thy pureness of life?

Hast ever heard of a guiltless man perishing,
Or of any just man being wholly destroyed?

As for me, I have seen the workers of wickedness
Reap the affliction they had previously sown.

At the breath of God they do disappear,
And are consumed by the wind of His wrath.

The roaring of the lion is stifled,
The teeth of the young lion are broken.

The lion dies for the want of his meat,
The young of the lioness are scattered abroad.

A word has been brought to me secretly,
And mine ear has heard a gentle murmur.*

In the midst of my thoughts came a nightly dream,
At the time when heavy sleep pressed upon men.

A terror and trembling seized upon me,
And I was shaken in all my bones.

A gentle wind passed over my face,
And made all my flesh creep with fear.

A being stood before me whose face I knew not,
An apparition stood before my eyes;
In the midst of the silence I heard a voice.

Man should ever be just before God,
Mortals be clean before Him who made them.

* In order to give authority to his doctrine Eliphaz pretends to have received a heavenly revelation.

God does not trust to His own servants ;*
 He has found depravity even in His angels ;
 How much more amongst men who live in mire,
 Who have their foundation down in the dust ;
 Who may be crushed like as a worm.
 From morn to even and he disappears ;
 Without being noticed he perishes for ever.
 The cord of their tent is cut through;†
 They die before they reach wisdom.
 Call then on thy fate. Is there any to answer ?
 Which of the holy ones wilt thou have recourse to ?‡
 The fool is killed by his evil humour ;
 The fool dies a victim to his own spite.
 I have seen the fool stretching out his roots,
 But soon I have had to curse his dwelling.
 His sons are lost beyond redemption,
 Crushed at the gate§ with none to defend them.
 The hungry man devours his harvest,
 He breaks down the hedges and despoils it ;
 And the thirsty man drinks in his wealth.
 Evil does not arise from out the dust ;
 Punishment does not grow in the soil.

* That is to say, to those holy beings who form His court, the same who have been termed "sons of God" in the prologue.

† A familiar image among the Semites signifying death. The body is compared to a tent—the soul is the cord which sustains the tent.

‡ The angels.

§ The gate was the forum of the eastern cities ; there justice was administered, and there they performed all the most important acts of civil life.

But man is ever born to trouble,
As the child of the lightning * rises in air.
From thine own place I turn myself to God ;
I address my words to the Almighty,
Who has done great things we cannot fathom,
And wonders which we cannot count ;
Who spreads the rain over all the earth,
And makes the waters to flow o'er the fields ;
Who raises the humble up,
And saves those who mourn ;
Who confounds the schemes of the treacherous,
And prevents them from carrying out their plots ;
Who takes the cunning in their own snares,
And frustrates the designs of the subtle ; †
In the daytime they jostle as in the dark,
And at noontime they grope as in the night.
God keeps the poor from the sword of their mouth ;
God saves the weak from the hands of the strong.
Their hope returns to the unfortunate,
And the mouth of iniquity is closed.
Happy the man whom God corrects ;
Despise not then the chastisement of God.
He wounds, and dresses the wound ;
He strikes, and His hand cures.

* A bird of prey.

† It would seem that this is a malicious insinuation against Job.

Six times shall He deliver thee from anguish,
The seventh time, and evil shall not touch thee.

In time of dearth He shall save thee from death ;
In the fight He shall keep thee from the sword.

Thou shalt be shielded from the scourge of the
tongue,*

Thou shalt not fear the havoc when it comes.

In the midst of wild havoc thou shalt laugh,
And thou shalt not fear the beasts of the earth.

Thou shalt have a bargain with the stones of the
ground,

And a compact with the beasts of the field.

Thou shalt see peace prevail within thy tent ;
In viewing thy fields thou shalt find nought needed.

Thou shalt see thy posterity multiply ;
And thine offspring increase like grass in the fields.

Thou shalt enter into the tomb full ripe,
Like a sheaf gathered in time of harvest.

Behold the fruit of our reflections !
Listen, and turn it to thine own profit.

Job then spoke and said :—

Would to God that one could weigh my feelings,
And put my misfortunes in the other scale !

* Meaning slander.

This seems more heavy than the sand of the sea !
Behold how my words escape with boldness !

For the arrows of the Almighty pierce me,
And my spirit is drinking in the poison :
The terrors of God are arrayed against me.

Does the wild ass roar when he has his grass ?
Does the ox complain when he has pasture ?

Does any one eat stale food without salt ?
Or find flavour in the juice of the mallow ?

Alas ! that my soul is filled with disgust,
And my daily bread eaten with loathing !

Who will help me to accomplish my vow,
That God may grant me the favour I crave ?

That He would deign to crush me at the last ;
Would loose His hand and cut my life's thread.

I have at the least this consolation,
This joy in the suffering which crushes me—
I have never broken the commands of the Holy
One.*

What then is my strength ? for I still have hope.
What end awaits me ? for yet I have patience.

My strength ! is it the strength of the rocks ?
My flesh ! is it composed of brass ?

Am I not stripped of all assistance ?
Each way of safety ! is it not closed ?

* Of God.

The wretched has a right to pity from his friends,
Even if he abandons the fear of the Almighty.

My brothers have been faithless as a torrent,
Like as the flowing of passing waters,
Which roll disturbed by the floating ice,
When swollen with the falling snow-flakes.

In time of drought it vanishes away,
And at the first heat it all disappears.

For it the caravans leave the known route,
And enter the desert to perish there.

The caravans of Teman * count upon it ;
The travellers of Saba put trust in it.

But they are all deceived in their trust ;
When they arrive they are confounded.

Thus have you totally deceived me ;
At the sight of misfortune you have fled.

Have I said to you, Give me something ;
Sacrifice part of your goods for me ?

Deliver me from the strength of the foe,
Ransom me from the hands of the robber ?

Teach me and I will listen in silence ;
Make me to see that I have indeed sinned.

The words of truth are undoubtedly sweet ;
To whom now will you apply your censure ?

Would you then apply censure to my words ?
A despairing man's talk belongs to the wind.

* A canton of Arabia Deserta.

Traitors ! you would make a mock to the orphan ;
You would make me a bargain to your friends.

See, if you can look me well in the face,
Then you may be able to judge if I lie.

Come back ! * Let there be no bias unjust.
Come back—my innocence then shall appear.

Is there any iniquity on my tongue ?
Does my palate not know to discern wrong ?

Yet man upon earth is like a soldier,
And his days are like those of an hireling ;
Like a slave who aims at a shadow ;
Like the hireling awaiting his labour.

Thus I have had my share of months of grief ;
Toilsome nights have been reckoned unto me.

When I lay down I said, Shall I get up ?
And the nights have been so long and weary.
I was racked with pain until the morning.

My flesh is clothed with lice and earthy crust ?
My skin is covered with scars and matter.

My days have been more rapid than a shuttle ;
They have vanished without returning.

Oh, God, remember that my life is breath.
Mine eyes shall not again see Thy goodness.

He who shall look for me shall not find me ;
Thine eye shall seek me, and I shall be no more.

* It seems that here there was some dumb show amongst Job's friends. The vigour of these apostrophes surprises them, and causes them to turn their faces as they were retiring.

The clouds disperse, and then they pass away.
He who goes into Sheol* comes up no more.

He shall return no more to his dwelling ;
His house shall not know him any longer.

Shall I bridle my mouth for ever ?

I will speak in the heaviness of my soul ;
I will groan in the bitterness of my heart.

Am I the ocean—or a sea monster ?

That you have set up a mound against me.

When I say to myself, My bed shall console me,
My couch shall allay my grievous pain,

Behold thou hast affrighted me with dreams ;
Thou hast terrified me with visions.

It is for this my soul has chosen death,
And my bones have called upon destruction.

I shall disappear—I shall go for ever.

Leave me, for my days are only a breath.

What is man, that thou honourest him with notice,
Why hast thou deigned to give him attention ?

Why dost thou examine him every morning ?

And why every moment dost thou prove him ?

How long wilt thine eyes be fixed on me ?

Wilt thou refuse me time to swallow my spittle ?

If I have sinned what matters it, oh, spy of man ?

Why hast thou exposed me to the force of thy blows ?

Am I to become a burden to myself ?

* In Hebrew Sheol—the subterranean world of the dead. See note p. 8.

Why dost thou not blot out my sin ?
 Why not make my wickedness disappear ?
 For soon I go to lay down in the dust ;
 Thou shalt seek me, but I shall be no more.

Then Bildad of Suah spoke and said :—

How long wilt thou continue this discourse ?
 The words of thy mouth are like a strong wind.
 Is it God who perverts the sight ?
 Does the Almighty fail to do justice ?
 It is because thy sons have sinned
 They have been delivered to their own wickedness.
 But if thou hast recourse to God,
 If thou prayest to the Almighty,
 If thy life has been only straight and pure,
 You may be sure He will watch over thee,
 And do thee justice at the latter end.
 And thy beginning shall be but small
 Compared with the grandeur of thine end.
 Enquire of the former generations,
 Apply thy mind to our Father's wisdom.
 We are of yesterday, and know nothing ;
 Our days upon earth are but a shadow.
 They will teach thee : they will talk to thee ; *
 From their hearts they will discourse.

* Like Eliphaz, who has recourse to a vision to enforce his address,
 Bildad here relies on the ancient sages.

Does the papyrus thrive out of the marsh ?
Can the rush live away from the water ?

Nobody cuts it whilst it is yet green ;
It is dry before the other grasses.

Such is the fate of those who forget God ;
The vain hopes of the impious shall perish.

His trust shall be shattered into pieces,
And his confidence as a spider's web.

He shall establish his house and it shall not last ;
Hold it with his hand, it shall not remain.

See the young plant full of sap exposed to the sun,
It covers the whole of his garden.

Its roots are to be found among the stones,
They touch the region of the granite.

But if one plucks it away from its place,
It disowns it, and says, I have never seen thee.

Such is the fruit of his conduct,
And of those after him bred from the soil.

No, God will not reject the innocent ;
He does not give His hand to evil doers.

Some day He will fill thy mouth with joy !
And thy lips shall be filled with rejoicing.

Thine enemies shall be covered with shame ;
The tent of the wicked is already no more.

Then Job spoke and said :—

Oh ! I know well it has been always thus ;
How can any man be just before God ?

When is one willing to dispute with Him ?
Once in a thousand times one is not right.

Oh, skilful and mighty adversary,
Who has braved Thee and remained safe ?

He removes mountains all on a sudden ;
He overturns them in His anger and wrath ;

He makes the earth to rebound from its place,
And the pillars which support it to tremble ;

He commands the sun, the sun does not rise ;
He doth put a seal upon all the stars ;

Alone He spreads the heavens as a tent ;
He walks upon the top of the billows.

He created the Great Bear, the Giant,* and
Pleiades ;

And the countries hidden under the Southern sky.

He has done wonders no one understands,
And prodigies which none can reckon up.

They pass before me, I have not seen them ;
They have been and I have not perceived them.

When He lays hold who will prevent ?
Who can say, What art Thou doing ?

* This is the constellation of Orion. In the Semitic East they regarded it as a giant who had revolted against God, probably Nimrod.

God does not return upon His anger;
Under Him do bow the hosts of the dragon.*

As for me shall I dream that He holds my head?
Shall I contend with Him in words?

Although I may be right I will not answer Him,
But rather demand favour from my Judge.

Even if He should answer my call
I should not dare to believe He had heard me.

He who places me in the midst of the tempest,
Who multiplies my wounds without motive,

Who will not allow me to draw my breath,
Who fills all my heart with bitterness.

In His strength He says, Behold me!
In His righteousness He says, Who calls me?

I will be just, though my mouth condemn me:†
I will be guiltless, though declared perverse.

Yes, I am innocent; it little concerns my existence;
I no longer can retain my life.‡

* The constellation to which belongs a legend like that of the giant, a monster fighting against God, and chained in Heaven with his companions, the constellation of the whale.

† Job, by a bold figure of speech, maintains that if he pleads against God his mouth even may betray him, and make him say what he does not wish to say.

‡ Job, in despair of maintaining his rights before God, gives vent to a sudden expression of anger, proclaiming loudly his innocence at the risk of being destroyed as the price of his audacity.

What is it worth ? Is it because I have said
He makes innocent and guilty to perish alike ?

Oh, that He would kill me at a blow—
But He laughs at the proofs of the innocent.

The earth is delivered into the hands of the wicked ;
He covers the face of the judges with a veil.

If it is not He, who is it then ?

My days have run faster than a messenger ;
They have gone without having seen any good.

They have passed like vessels of rushes ;
Like the eagle when he darts on his prey.

If I have said, Let us forget our complaints,
Let us look cheerful, and make ourselves gay,

I dread the return of my pain,
Knowing thou wilt not absolve me.

I am condemned beforehand ;
Why this useless punishment ?

I shall bathe myself in the snow ;
I shall wash my hands in Bor.*

That Thou wouldst plunge me in a stinking hole,
So that my garments might be disgusting to all.

God is not my equal that I can answer Him,
That I can make comparisons as to justice.

There is no one to arbitrate between us ;
He uses His authority upon us both.

* Ashes mixed with oil used instead of soap.

That He would remove His rod from over me,
 That His terrors would cease from pursuit of me.
 Then I could speak to him without fear.
 At the bottom of my heart I am not what I seem.*
 My soul is tired of life ;
 I give full vent to my complaint ;
 I speak in the bitterness of my heart.†
 I said to God, Do not condemn me so quickly ;
 Let me know why I am persecuted.
 Dost Thou find pleasure in oppression ?
 In repelling the work of Thine hands,
 Thou dost watch the counsel of the wicked.
 Hast Thou then the eyes of flesh ?
 Dost Thou see us as men see ?
 Are Thy days like the days of man ?
 Thy years like the days of mortals ?
 Why dost Thou seek out my faults ?
 Why pursue after my sins ?
 Thou knowest well that I am guilty,
 That nothing can be saved from Thy hand.
 Thine hands have created and formed me,
 And now Thou wishest to destroy me.
 Remember Thou hast fashioned me like clay,
 And now Thou wishest to bring me to the dust.

* The conscience of Job is at rest ; the cause of his trouble is beyond him. It is God who has arrayed terrors against him and deprived him of that freedom of spirit necessary for his defence.

† Job continues to believe that the boldness of his speech will be punished with death.

Thou hast made me trickle like milk,
And curdled me like as a cheese.

Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh,
And interlaced me with bones and nerves.

Thou hast lavished on me life and favour ;
Thy providence has watched over my breath.

Let me see what Thou hidest in Thine heart ;
Let me know the fate Thou hast kept for me.*

Sinner ! I find in thee a judge most strict ;
Thou dost not pardon any single fault.

Oh guilty ! Alas, unhappy me !
Oh just ! I dare no longer lift my face !
O'erwhelmed with shame—spectator of my misery !

If I raise my head, thou pursuest as a lion ;
Thou beginnest again to defy me ;

Thou confrontest me with new witnesses ;
Thou redoublest thy fury against me.
Legions of enemies assail me by turns.

Why didst draw me from the womb that bore me ?
I should have died, and none should have seen me.

I should be as though I never had been ;
I should have passed from the womb to the grave.

My days have been as nought—a truce !

* Job affects to believe in a perfidious plan of God, that He desired to heap benefits upon him, and afterwards to treat him with extreme rigour.

Let me rejoice, if but for a moment,
 Before I depart, without hope of return,
 To the dark world of shadows and horror.
 Oh ! sad and sombre earth !
 Where chaos and darkness reign,
 Where noontide is like the night.

Then Sophar of Naama took up the discourse and said :—

Shall thy garrulity remain without reply ?
 Does thine eloquence convince thee of right ?
 Will men of sense listen silently to thy nonsense ?
 Wilt thou mock, and shall no one confound thee ?
 Thou hast said to God, My teaching is good ;
 I am without reproach before Thee.
 I would that God should take up the word,
 And open His lips to answer thee.
 That He would show the secrets of wisdom,
 The hidden replies of His purpose.
 Then you would see you've been treated with mercy.
 Dost thou think to reach the depth of God's wisdom ?
 Dost thou hope to reach the perfection of God ?
 It is higher than heaven—wilt thou reach it ?
 Deeper than hell—how canst thou know it ?
 The measure is far longer than the earth :
 It is even much larger than the sea.

When He finds the guilty, He imprisons them ;
When the tribunal assembles who can hinder ?

He knows when to take the wrong-doer ;
He discovers the crime which no one suspects.

In this way even the fool becomes wise,
And the young of the wild ass reasonable.*

If then thou turnest thy heart towards God,
If thou stretchest forth thine arms towards Him,

When thou puttest crime away from thine hands,
And iniquity no longer dwells in thy tent ;

Then thou shalt lift up thy face without stain ;
Thou shalt be unshaken, and shalt fear nothing.

Thou shalt forget then all thy sufferings ;
Thou shalt remember them as water passed away.

Thy future shall be more brilliant than noonday ;
The darkness of the present shall be as the morning.

Thou shalt be full of confidence and hope ;
Thou shalt look around thee and rest assured.

Thou shalt rest and none shall make thee afraid ;
Troops of flatterers shall fawn to thy face.

But the eyes of the wicked shall be consumed ;
All their issue shall be shut up,
Their hope worthless as the breath of the dying.

* Proverbial expression : the wild ass is generally accepted for the type of stupidity.

Then Job resumed the conversation and said :—

Truly you are the whole world ;
With you wisdom will die.

Nathless, I have as much intelligence as you ;
In nothing am I inferior to you.
Who knows all that you came to say ?

I am a man mocked by his friends,
Having no help but in God
The just—the innocent is an object of derision.

Contempt for misfortune is the thought of the
happy.

Contempt awaits all whose feet are tottering.

Peace reigns, however, in the tents of the robbers ;
Security among those who provoke the Most High,
Those who carry their god in their hand.*

Ask the animals ; shall they be thy masters ? †
Question the birds ; they shall give thee lessons.

Speak to the earth ; it shall teach thee.
The fishes even shall repeat thy discourses.

Who does not know among all these beings
That the arm of God has made the universe ?

That in his hand is the soul of these living beings,
And the breath of all mankind ?

* That is to say, those who recognise no other deity than their own violence.—Dextra mihi deus. Virg. CEn. x. 773.

† Here Job repeats the thought he had expressed before in the first words of his discourse, and goes to prove that the doctrine of Sophar has nothing rare or wonderful in it.

It is the ear which distinguishes words,
As the palate tastes the food.

Wisdom should be sought among the aged :
Knowledge is the fruit of lengthened days.

In Him * are to be found wisdom and strength ;
Counsel and intelligence belong to Him.

What He has destroyed no one can rebuild,
The man whom He shuts up none can deliver.

He withholds the waters and they are dried up ;
He lets them go and they overwhelm the earth.

To Him belongs power and precedence ;
On Him depends the beguiler and the beguiled.†

He makes captives of the senators,
And of the judges He makes fools.

He unites the belt of the kings,
And binds their loins with a cord.

He brings the priests into captivity ;
He doth overturn the mighty men.

He brings to naught the words of the most certain,
And makes light of the wisdom of the aged.

He brings shame upon the noble,
And loosens the girdle of the strong.‡

* That is to say, God, the continued subject of discourse. Job wishes to prove by this long tirade on the greatness of God that he is not less eloquent than Sopher.

† That is to say, the whole human species—playthings of error.

‡ That is to say, He makes them powerless in the combat by cutting the girdle which retains their flowing garments.

He discovers the deeps and withdraws the shade ;
He produces a light in the darkest depth.

He raises nations, and then reduces them ;
He extends people beyond their bounds, and then
brings them back.

He deprives the chiefs of the earth of intelligence,
And makes them aimlessly wander in the desert.

They feel the shadow and not the light :
He makes them wander like drunken men.

Mine eye has seen all that,
Mine ear has heard and understood.

That which you know I also know ;
I am in nothing inferior to you.

It is to the Almighty I wish to speak ;
It is with God I would plead my cause.

But you ! you are mere makers of lies ;
You are mere useless physicians.

If you had only kept silence,
That would have passed for wisdom.

Listen, I pray you, to my defence ;
Bring your attention to the pleading of my lips.

Would you wish God to hold wicked discourse,
And to please Him by offering a lie ?

Would you wish Him to respect persons ?
Are you then the advocates of God ?

Would it be good that He should search your hearts?

Could you cheat Him as you cheat a man?

He would be the first to condemn you,
If in secret you had respect to persons.

Does not His majesty terrify you?

Do not His terrors overwhelm you?

Your sayings are reasons of ashes;

Your defences are defences of mud.

Leave me, for I wish to speak;

It will come to me immediately.

When it comes I take my flesh in my teeth;

I take my soul into my hand.*

God kills me; I have lost all hope;

I cannot defend my conduct to His face.

One thing at least can save me—

The wicked cannot be admitted to His presence.†

Listen to my words;

Give ear to my discourse.

Behold, I am ready; I have disposed of my case;

I know that justice is on my side.

Is there any one who will dispute with me?

If he presents himself I will be silent and die.

* A proverbial form of speech, of which the sense is: I have taken my part in it; I am resolved to die; I have no more care.

† He wavers between two contradictions: on the one side he believes, according to an opinion very prevalent among the Eastern Semites, that no one could see God without dying; on the other side he imagines that God could reveal Himself to the wicked.

Spare me two things only, Oh, God !

If Thou wilt that I hide me before Thy face—

Let not Thine hand crush me ;

Let not Thy terrors affright me.

After that, accuse me and I will answer,

Or let me speak and Thou shalt answer me.*

Tell me the number of my crimes,

And let me know mine iniquities.

Why hide Thy face thus ? †

Why treat me as an enemy ?

Wilt Thou drive me away as a leaf by the wind ?

Wilt Thou pursue me as a dried straw ?

Thou dost write against me a bitter sentence ;

Thou imputest to me the sins of my childhood ‡

For Thou placest my feet in fetters

That Thou may'st spy out all my ways ;

Thou layest out a ditch around an unhappy one.

Consumed like a rotten timber ;

Like a garment gnawed by worms.

Man born of a woman

Lives few days and full of trouble.

Like a flower half blown he is cut down ;

Like a shadow he flees—without permanence.

* That which follows is as though Job, reduced to despair and resolved to enjoy his life, is addressing God as a pleader.

† This supposes that God is confounded, and has nothing to say to the bold question which has been put to Him.

‡ Job, not feeling himself guilty of any crime, supposes that God would revive against him crimes committed without knowledge, or when he had no consciousness.

It is upon such a being Thou openest Thine eyes.
Behold, it is such a one Thou bringest to justice
with Thee.

Who can draw purity from dirt ?
No one !

If the days of man are counted,
If the number of his months are fixed by Thee,
If Thou hast placed a limit he must not pass—
Turn away Thine eyes that he may rest awhile,
And enjoy like a hireling the end of his work.

For the living tree there is yet some hope ;
When it is cut down it may grow again ;
It does not cease to put forth its rootlets.

E'en when its root has grown old in the ground,
And its stem appears as dead in the soil,
When it feels the water it puts forth shoots,
And is covered with leaves as a young plant.

But when a man dies he remains stretched out ;
When a man has expired, where is he ?

The waters of the lake do disappear ;
The river drains itself, and is dried up.

But a man who lies down does not rise up :
He will not awake whilst the heavens last :
He will not again rise out of his sleep.

Oh ! If Thou wouldst grant me a place in hell,
And hide me there till Thy wrath pass away,
Name a time when Thou wilt remember me !

But man, when once dead, does he live again ? *

All this time I have waited at my post;

None has come to relieve me from my guard.

Wilt Thou call me ? and I will answer thee.†

Thou shalt wish to see the work of my hands.

But what !—Thou dost observe all my footsteps ; ‡

Thou dost keep count of all my private faults.

My condemnation is sealed in a bag. §

Thou hast devised iniquity against me.

The falling mountain gives way by degrees ;

The rock is transported out of its place. ||

The falling water hollows out the stone ;

The river sweeps off the soil of its banks.

It is thus Thou destroyest the hopes of man.

Thou crushest him, and he passes away ;

Thou makest him so that none shall know him, ¶

And then Thou dost cast him into the hell.

If his children are honoured he knows it not ;

If they are despised he does not perceive.

* Job wavers between despair and confidence. First he is struck with the fact that man does not rise again ; then he thinks that God can recall him to life : he compares himself in hell to a soldier on duty who waits to be relieved.

† Job, when he entertains the hope that God will remember him in hell, believes that He hears his voice when he calls.

‡ The remembrance of God's severity makes Job fall back into despair.

§ Letters and official documents are, in the East, enclosed in a bag and sealed up.

|| Job concludes with resignation, and consoles himself for the decay of man by the sight of the slow destruction of nature.

¶ Alluding to the fearful malady with which Job was afflicted.

His flesh feels only his own suffering,
And his soul groans only for his own pain.

Then Eliphaz of Teman began to speak, and said :—

Does the wise answer with windy knowledge ?
Does he fill his bosom with the north wind ?

Does he defend himself with empty words ?
By words which will serve no useful purpose ?

Thou also ! thou hast destroyed piety,
Thou hast diminished our respect for God.

Thy mouth even reveals thine iniquity,
Whatever may be the trick in thy words.

Thine own mouth and not mine condemns thee ,
Thine own lips have borne witness against thee.

Wast thou indeed born the first among men ? *
Wast thou really brought forth before the hills ?

What dost thou know then that we do not know ?
What notions hast thou that we do not have ?

We have amongst us some of the white heads—
Some men older than your father in years.

Dost thou make so light of God's consolations,
And the mild words with which we address thee ?

Where does your heart propose to carry you ?
What do thy wild eyes now desire to say ? †

* This is an allusion to the Divine Wisdom, originating, according to Hebrew ideas, before all creation. The same expressions are to be found in Prov. viii. 25.

† We must suppose here some dumb show on the part of Job, irritated by the hypocritical talk of Eliphaz.

For thou darest make God an object of wrath,
And hold forth a discourse like this to Him.

What is man that he should claim to be pure,
The son of woman that he should be innocent?

God does not trust even His holy ones;*
The Heavens,† indeed, are not pure before Him.

How much more is perverse and abominable
Man, who drinks wickedness like unto water!

I am about to instruct thee. Listen!
I will tell thee about what I have seen—

That which the wise and good have taught us—
The doctrine they had learned from their fathers—

A pure breed living on earth by themselves,
Amongst whom no stranger ever had passed.

Trouble fills up the days of the wicked,
The tale of years reserved for the tyrant.

Dread noises fill the ears of the cruel;
In the midst of peace he melteth away.

He does not hope to escape the darkness;
He regards himself as spared for the sword;

Already he wanders and seeks his bread;
He knows of the dark days awaiting him.

Fearful misery and dreadful distress
Assail him as a king prepared for war;

* That is to say, His angels.

† That is to say, the beings who compose the heavenly court.

For he has lifted his hand against God ;
He has puffed him up against the Almighty.
He runs towards him with a straightened neck ;
He has set up his back as a buckler ;*
His face is covered over with fatness ;
His loins are weighed down with collops of fat.
Behold why he lives in the ruined towns,
In houses which have no inhabitants,
Which are destined to become heaps of stones.
He shall no more be rich ; his wealth shall go ;
His lands shall not be extended on earth.
He shall not depart out of the darkness ;
The fire shall burn up all of his branches ;
He shall dissolve at the breath of God's mouth.
He hopes for nothing from evil. Madman !
Evil, then, shall be his only reward.
His fate is decided before the time.
His branches of palm shall never be green.
He falls as the vine drops its bitter grapes ;
He is cast as the bloom of the olive.
The race of the wicked shall be barren ;
Fire shall destroy the tent of the corrupt.
He has devised evil and bred misfortune,
And his heart has engendered a lie.

* That is to say, in making the tortoise, as was done in the **military** exercises of the ancients.

Then Job took up the discourse and said :—

I have listened fully to like discourses.

You are all comforters intolerable.

Hast thou now finished with those empty words ?

What am I called upon then to answer ?

Should I also talk like you

If you were in my place ?

I will arrange all my words against you ;

I will gently incline my head to you.*

I will try to console you with my mouth ;

You shall have comfort in my lip's pity.

But what ! if I speak, my grief is not allayed.

If I cease my complaining, what do I gain ?

All my strength is completely exhausted.

Thou hast despoiled all the men of my tribe.

Thou hast seized me like as a criminal.

My meagreness will bear witness for me ;

It rises against me and answers me.

His wrath tears me and pursues after me ;†

The gnashing of his teeth is upon me ;

Mine enemy darts his eyes against me.

They open their mouth to devour me ;

They slap my cheeks with ignominy ;

They attack me each of them by turns.

* The movement of the head is here taken as a sign of apparent compassion, which hides a sarcasm in reality.

† The troubled spirit of Job here confounds, in a series of terrible images, God and his enemies, passing abruptly from one idea to the other.

God has delivered me to the impious ;
He has thrown me in the hands of the wicked.

I was in peace and then He disturbed me ;

He seized my head and tore me in pieces ;

He exposed me as a target to blows ;

His arrows they fly all round about me ;

He pierces my loins without any ruth ;

He has scattered my gall upon the earth.

In my breast He opens breach upon breach.

He charges against me like an armed man.

I have fixed a cloth of hair on my skin ;

I have plunged my forehead deep in the dust.

My face is all reddened with much weeping.

A dark veil is spread quite over my eyes.

But there is no wickedness on my hands ;

My prayer has always been * free from sin.

Oh, earth ! do not thou cover up my blood,

That my cry for vengeance may not be stifled.

I have yet a safe witness in heaven,

A certain surety in the sky above.

My friends they laugh at me,

But mine eyes weep towards God.

For He Himself will judge 'twixt God and man ;

Between the son of man and his likeness.†

* That is to say, my worship.

† Job, irritated at the wickedness of his friends, against whom he has no remedy, again, by a touching contradiction, turns to God, whom he accepts as judge, although He may be at the same time his adversary.

For I see the end of my years has come ;
I walk in tracks I shall never repass.

My life is destroyed ;
My days are extinguished ;
I rest but in the tomb.

Would to God the traitors were far from me,
And mine eyes not vexed with their quarrels.

Oh God ! be Thou my pledge against Thyself ;
Who but Thee will strike their hands for me ? *

Thou hast closed their hearts unto reason ;
Wilt Thou not also carry on their cause ?

The man who doth betray his friends
Shall see the eyes of his children fail.

They have made me a byeword among nations ;
A wretch fit only to be spat upon.

Mine eyes are dimmed by grief ;
My limbs are become as a shadow.

The upright are sorely amazed ;
They imagine wrath against the impious.

The just, however, continue in their way ;
And those whose hands are clean remain steadfast

Well now ! return ! I pray you ; †
I shall prove that none of you are wise.

* This was the sign by which one became surety for another.

† Job's friends, irritated by his vehement language, threaten to leave him.

My days are passed—all my schemes are upset :
 The designs of which my heart made much.
 You make the day out of the night ;
 Ah ! your day resembles the darkness.*
 When all my hope was dwelling in hell
 I had already made my bed in darkness.†
 When I have called the grave my father,
 And rottenness my mother and sister,
 Where then should be my hope ?
 My hope ! who can see it ?
 It has gone right down to the gates of hell,
 If haply I may find rest in the dust !

Then Bildad of Suah took up the discourse and said :—

When wilt thou put an end to thy talking ?
 When wilt thou be wise, and allow us speak ?
 Why dost thou treat us like stupid beasts,
 And look upon us as senseless creatures ?
 Unhappy one ! who tearest thyself with rage,
 Dost thou wish the earth to be left for thee,
 The rock to be removed from out its place ?
 Yea, the lamp of the wicked shall be put out,
 And the flame of his hearth shall not shine.

* Job finds a proof of the folly of his friends in this, that they wished to inspire him with hope in a place where evidently there was no ground for hope.

† Job regards himself as already settled in Sheol.

The light is darkened in his tent ;
The torch is put out beside him.

His steps, if firm, shall be circumscribed ;
He shall be confounded by his own counsel.

His feet shall be caught in the set snare,
He shall walk into the trap which is laid.

His heels shall be taken by the springs ;
The net shall take firm hold of him.

A cord is stretched for him under the earth ;
A trap is hidden in the path he goes.

On all sides terrors shall besiege him :
They shall pursue him step by step.

Misfortune shows to him a hungry throat,
And ruin watches him on every side.

The limbs of his body shall be the prey,
His limbs the prey of the firstborn of death.*

He shall be snatched from the tent he trusted ;
They shall bring him to the King of Terrors.†

The stranger shall live in the tent he had.
Brimstone shall be sown over his dwelling.

Below the ground his roots shall be dried up ;
Above, all his branches shall be cut off.

His memory has disappeared from the earth ;
The fields do no longer bear his name.

* Sickness was believed by the Semitic poets to be the daughter of death ; the firstborn of death means a malady which surpasses all others in horror.

† Death—a sort of Pluto, king of the infernal regions, not regarded as a real personage, but a creature of the imagination.

He is driven from light into darkness ;
He is banished from out the universe.

He has left no descendants in his tribe,
Nor is there a survivor in his house.

The men of to-day are perplexed at his fate ;
The race following shall be horrified.

Behold the destiny of the wicked,
Behold his portion who knows not God.

Then Job took up the word and said :—

How long will you vex my soul ?

Will you crush me with your talk ?

Behold ! the tenth time you insult me ;
You weary me to death without shame.

Ah, well ! So be it ! I admit I have sinned ;
My sin affects none but myself.

By what right dare you speak thus to me,
And pretend to convict me of wrong ?

Do you know that God has infringed my right ;
That He has entangled me in His nets ?

I protest against wrong and none answer me ;
I appeal against it and none do right.

He has fenced my way with a pathless hedge ;
He has spread His darkness over my paths.

He has deprived me of all my glory ;
He has taken the diadem from my head.

He has demolished me entirely—I die ;
He has torn my hope from me like a tree.

He has lighted His anger against me ;
He has dealt with me as an enemy.

His squadrons have assembled together :
They have prepared a way against me ;
They have laid violent siege to my tent.

He has sent my brothers away from me ;
He has drawn all my friends from about me ;
My relations have all abandoned me ;
Those who knew me have all forgotten me.

My guests and servants treat me as a stranger ;
I am become as unknown among them.

I call a servant ; he does not answer ;
I am reduced to provide my own food.

I have become indifferent to my wife ;
I address prayers to my own children.

The very children even despise me ;
When I try to rise they begin to mock.

My intimate friends look on me with horror :
And those whom I love turn all against me.

My bones stick to my skin and to my flesh.
I have escaped with the skin of my teeth.*

Pity—pity—from you at least, my friends,
For the hand of God has struck me down.

Why do you join with God to pursue me ?
Are you, too, also greedy for my flesh ?

* A proverbial expression, and equivalent to "I have lost all ; I have kept nothing safe and sound."

Who will aid that my words may be written—
May be written in a book and engraved?

With a stylus of iron and with lead;*
Sculptured on the rock for ever and aye.

For I know that my avenger liveth:
He will appear at the last upon earth.

When this my skin shall have fallen in strips,
Deprived of my flesh, I shall then see God.†

I shall see Him myself—
Not with eyes of another.
My loins waste with waiting.

Then you will say why not pursue Him?
The good things will be found by His side.

On that day fear ye the sword;
The wrath of God will punish by the sword.
It is then you will learn there is justice.

Then Sophar of Naama took up the word and
spoke:—

My thoughts suggest an obvious reply,
To ease the inward trouble I feel.

I have heard a word of shameful reproach:
From the depth of my heart my spirit replies.‡

* They pour lead into the marks left by the graver on the hard surface, and thus render the writing more legible.

† Job abandons the hope of seeing God come down to earth, when he will be reduced to a skeleton for revenge on his enemies.

‡ The Hebrews believed that intelligence was impersonal, and saw in it a kind of revelation of the spirit of God.

Dost thou not know that from earliest time,
Since man was first placed upon the earth,
The triumph of the wicked has been short,
And the joy of the impious but for a moment ?
Even when his stature reaches heaven,
And his head touches the lofty clouds,
Like vile dung he perishes for ever :
Those who do see him say, Where is he gone ?
He passeth like a dream not again seen ;
He flieth like a vision in the night.
The eye has observed him for the last time :
His resting place will not see him longer.
His sons shall quiet the poor he has made ;
They shall restore to them all his riches.
His bones shall be full of his hidden crimes ;
They shall slumber with him in the dust.
Because evil has been sweet in his mouth,
Wickedness has been hidden under his tongue.
He has saved it and has not rejected it ;*
He has tasted it slowly in his mouth.
His food shall turn to poison in his bowels :
It shall be as gall of vipers in his bosom.
The riches he has swallowed he shall vomit :
God himself shall draw them out of his guts.
He has sucked in the poison of vipers :
The tongue of the asp shall kill him.

* Like a bonbon which is allowed to melt in the mouth.

Never about his paths shall trickle
Streams of honey or of flowing milk.

He shall give up all he has taken, and not glut any more :

His restitutions shall equal his riches, leaving none to enjoy.

He has illtreated the poor and despoiled him ;
He has sacked their houses and not rebuilt them.

The cravings of his stomach have not known rest ;
He shall not save that which he holds most dear.

Nothing shall escape his gluttony ;
Even his good qualities shall not last.

In full prosperity he shall come to grief ;
The blows of misfortune shall fall on him.

Listen ! see with what he fills his belly.

God shall send him the fire of His anger :
He will pour it on him in the guise of bread.

He flies before the arms of fire ;
The bow of brass transfixes him.

He draws out the dart from his own body,
The bright steel which has pierced his liver ;
The terrors of death have surrounded him.

His treasures are all destined to perish :
The fire shall devour them, no one stirring,
And it shall consume the rest of his tent.

The heavens shall reveal his iniquity ;
The earth itself shall rise up against him.

Who returns to his house shall be dispersed :
They shall fall away in daylight from wrath.
Such is the lot God reserves for the wicked,
The heritage given by the Most High.

Then Job took up the word and spoke :—

Listen, listen unto the words I speak.

Allow me at least this consolation.

Allow me for once to speak in my turn ;
When I have spoken continue your jeers.

Is it of man that I ever complain ?

How is it I do not lose all patience ?

Look at me now and remain astonished,
And put up your hands upon all your mouths.

When I think of it I even tremble,
And my flesh is seized with fearful horror.

How is it that the ungodly do live,

How grow they old, how increase in power ?

Their families do prosper around them,
Their branches do increase under their eyes ;

Their houses are protected from all fear,
The rod of God does not touch them at all.

Their cattle do not lose their fruitfulness,
And their heifers do not slip their young ones.

Their family spreads like unto a flock,

Their children are always dancing around.

They play the tambourine and the guitar,
And amuse themselves with sounds of the pipe ;

They do pass all their days in happiness.
They descend into Sheol in a moment.*

However they have said to God, Go from us !
We do not wish you to know of our ways.

What is the Most High that we should serve Him ?
What shall we gain by praying unto Him ?

Is their happiness certain in their hands ?
(Far be the counsel of the wicked from me !)

Who sees the lamp of the wicked extinguished,
The chastisement they deserve fall on them,†
Their share of God's anger allotted to them ?

Dost see them carried off like straw by the wind,
Like chaff of wheat driven off by the whirlwind ?

God, you say, reserves chastisement for His own,
But He ought to punish those whom He sees.

Let them see their ruin with their own eyes ;
Let them drink the wrath of the Almighty.

What matters to them their houses after them,
When once the number of their months is full ?

Dost thou dare pretend to teach God wisdom ?
He who judges the highest of beings !

* Sudden death was looked upon as a blessing.

† Job takes almost literally, in order to rebut them, the figures of speech which his friends have used to show that the wicked are always punished.

Man dies in the midst of his prosperity,
Perfectly quiet, perfectly happy.

The flocks in his pens overflow with milk :
The marrow in their bones is copiously moistened.
Another dies in bitterness of soul
Without having had a taste of happiness.

Both of them lie in the dust,
And the worms cover the two.

Ah ! I well understand your inner thoughts,
And the opinions formed in your minds.

You say where is the house of the tyrant ?
What has become of the tent of the wicked ?

But you do not ask the passers-by ; *
They will tell you the truth of the matter.

On the fatal day—they will tell you—the wicked is
spared :

On the day of divine wrath he escapes chastise-
ment.

Who blames him to his face for his conduct ?
Who renders him like for what he has done ?

He is carried honourably to the grave.†

They seem to watch always over his tomb.

* Travellers, being supposed to have a more complete experience of the government of the world from what they have seen in passing through the different countries.

† That is, he rests in a mausoleum surmounted by his statue, according to the custom of the Egyptians. Possibly, this is an allusion to the minatory inscriptions against the riflers of tombs, like those on the sarcophagus of the king of Sidon Eschmunazar.

The earth of the vale rests on him lightly.*
 He leads the whole world in his mourning train.
 Numberless crowds have already gone before.†
 What signifies then your vain consolations ?
 There is nothing but evil at the bottom.

Then Eliphaz of Teman took up the word and said :—

Can a man be of any use to God ?
 No ! To Him alone the wise is useful.
 What is it to the Almighty if you are just ?
 What does He gain if your conduct is perfect ?
 Dost thou think He punishes for fear,
 And that He will meet thee in judgment ?
 Thy wickedness, is it not beyond count ?
 Thy sins, too—are they not without number ?
 Thou takest pledges from brethren without cause ;
 Thou takest away the garments from the naked.
 Thou givest no drink to the weary man ;
 Thou hast refused bread to him who was hungry.
 The earth falls into the hands of the fierce :
 The dreaded one becometh its master.‡

* The usual places of burial were in the valleys adjacent to the towns.

† The example of the wicked dying in prosperity induces the crowd to follow his example, which has already had too many predecessors.

‡ These misfortunes, according to the notions of Eliphaz, have been brought about by Job's fault ; Job, being in effect the judge, ought to have prevented them.

Thou hast sent away the widows empty :
The arms of the orphans have been broken.

Behold, why art thou surrounded with snares,
And disturbed with unexpected terrors ?

Surrounded with darkness hindering sight,
And submerged by the deluge of waters ?

Does not God dwell in the heights of heaven ?
In the face of the stars ; how lofty He is !

And thou sayest what shall God know ?
Can He judge through the thick darkness ?

The clouds hide, and prevent Him from seeing ;
He walks along the vault of the Heavens.*

Dost thou wish to keep the old ways
Which the workers of wickedness followed ?

Who were carried away with violence ;
Who were swept away by the waters.†

Who say to God, Go far away from us ;
Who ask the Almighty what He can do !

He has filled their houses with good things ;
Far be the wicked man's counsels from me !

The just shall see their ruin, and rejoice ;
The young innocents shall make mock at them.

Lo, they shall say, our enemies are weak ;
The fire has consumed all their riches.

* That is to say, He does not dream of what goes on upon earth.

† Alluding to the deluge or some tradition of a similar kind.

Make thy peace with God, and thou shalt be saved ;
And happiness shall return unto thee.

Hearken unto the teaching of His mouth,
And place His words within thine heart.

Thou shalt raise thyself, if thou turn to the
Almighty ;

Thou shalt put wickedness far from thy tent.

Throw the ingots of gold into the dust :

The metal of Ophir among the brook stones.

The Almighty shall be all thy treasure ;
God shall be to thee as a heap of gold.

Thou shalt be at peace with the Almighty ;
Thou shalt raise thy face to Him without fear.

Thou shalt pray to Him, and He shall hear thee ;
And He shall absolve thee from all thy vows.*

That which thou undertakest shall succeed ;
The light shall then shine upon all thy ways.

Be meek, and thou shalt regain the high hand ;
For God will help those whose eyes are kept low.

The guilty even shall be saved from wrath ;
Saved, I say, by the pureness of thine hands.†

Then Job took up the word, and said :—

Once more my complaint has been called revolt ;
But my groans are not equal to my grief.

* That is to say, God shall hear thee always. *Damnabit te quoque votis.*—Virg. *Eccl.* v. 80.

† That is to say, thanks to your merits and out of regard to you.

Oh, if I knew where to find what I want,
If I could but arrive near to His throne,
I would lay my whole case before Him ;
I would fill my mouth with sound reasons.
I should know what He could urge against me ;
I should see then how He would answer me.
Instead of fighting with a show of strength,
I wish He would give me a little heed.
He would say it was a just man's defence,
And I should thus be protected from my judge.
If I go to the East, He is not there ;
If I turn to the West I find Him not.
Does He exercise power in the North ? I do not
see it.
Does He plunge into the depths of the South ? I
perceive it not.
Ah ! That He would but know my conscience ; *
That He would test me, and I be like pure gold.
My foot has always stood upon His track ;
I have walked in His paths without straying.
I have not gone from the words of His lips ;
I have kept in my heart all His precepts.
But He has taken sides. Who can turn Him ?
His soul once determined, the thing is done.

* Job pretends that God, resolved to destroy him, conceals Himself so as not to comprehend the proofs of his innocence—proofs so convincing that if He would but listen He would be obliged to admit them.

He will accomplish what He has decreed.
But perchance He may turn to another design.

This is why I flee from before His face ;
When I think I hide affrighted before Him.

God has rendered my heart quite powerless ;
The Almighty has thoroughly dismayed me.

He has not removed the dark days from me ;
He has not preserved me from the darkness.

Why does not the Eternal dispose of time,
That His servants see His day of justice ?

The wicked remove the bounds of the fields ;*
They pasture their flocks which they have stolen.

They drive before the ass of the orphan ;
They take in pledge the ox of the widow.

They force the poor to turn out of the road ;
The weak of the country they force to hide.

Their victims are like asses in the wilds ;
They go out in the morning to seek food ;
The desert provides bread for their children.

They gather their pasturage in the fields ;
They steal from the vineyards of their tyrant.

They pass the night without any clothing ;
They have no covering against the cold.

* One of the crimes of the powerful was to remove the stones which served for boundaries, to the detriment of their weaker neighbours, who dared not replace them.

They are drenched with rain from the mountains ;
Without any shelter they cling to the rock.*

They take the orphan from his mother's breast ;
The wretches take pledges even from the poor.

They strip those they have brought to misery,
And take from the hungry his master's sheaf.

These press the oil in their spoiler's cellars ;
In treading the winepress they are thirsty.

The groans of the dying are heard in the towns ;
The soul of the wounded cries for vengeance.
God takes no care of these indignities.

There are some others who hate the light,†
Who know not the ways on which it shines,
And do not keep in his footpaths.

The assassin gets up at break of day ;
He murders the weak and the wretched poor ;
He prowls in the night, sneaking like a thief.

The adulterer's eye looks out for the twilight.
No one will see me, says he ;
And he puts a veil over his face.

Some do break into houses in the dark ;
During the day they keep themselves shut up.
They do not understand what is the light.

* So as to cover at least some part of their bodies.

† After having described the life of the robbers who committed their crimes in daylight, Job passes to another kind of wretches, those who do not love the light because of their misdeeds.

For morn is to them the shadow of death;*
They feel death-terrors when they see the dawn.

They are like something light on the water;
Their inheritance is cursed on the earth,
They never ~~ke~~ the way of the vineyard.†

The drought and heat absorb the snow water;
Thus I know the grave devours those who sin.‡

The bosom which has borne them forgets them,
They are become a morsel for the worms,
Nobody remembers them,
They are broken like a tree.

The fierce who devour the barren woman,§
Who do evil and wrong to the widow.

But God with strength does not maintain them;
They are taken away when they most count on life.

God has given them trust and confidence;
His eyes watch over all their goings.

They disappear in the midst of prosperity;
They fall as fall all the other beings;
They are cut down like a ripe ear of corn.

* Because the morn will cause discovery of their deeds.

† That is to say, they never reach the happy state of the people who have passed from the wandering life of the Bedouin to the agricultural and sedentary life.

‡ Job agrees with his friends that the wicked perish in their turn, but he cannot see in that a chastisement of God, for it is the common fate of man; and, so far from the end of the wicked being sad and premature, it seems that God prolongs their days, and makes their death as easy as possible.

§ The barren woman, not having any son to defend her, is taken as a type of weakness.

If it is not thus, who says that I lie,
And will render my discourse a mere nought ?

Then Bildad of Suah took up the word and said :—

Power and terror belong unto Him.*
He doth make peace in all the high places.†
Who is able to reckon His legions ?
Upon whom indeed does His light not shine ?
How then shall a man be just before God ?
How shall the son of a woman be pure ?
The moon itself is not clear before Him ;
The stars even are not pure in His eyes.
How much then man, who is only a worm,
The son of man, who is but rottenness ?

Then Job took up the word and said :—

How well you know how to sustain weakness ;
To bring help to the arm which has no strength.
How well you know to advise the stupid ;
To make flow a torrent of wisdom.

* Bildad, in despair at overcoming the obstinate impiety of Job, and at showing how mad his endeavour to reach the throne of God, ceases to take a part in the discourse, and exalts in a general way the Divine power.

† That is to say, in Heaven, among the Heavenly powers.

To whom dost thou address thy flowing words ?
What spirit doth utter speech by thy mouth ? *

The giants shudder under the waters ; †
And the inhabitants thereof tremble.

Hell itself is uncovered before Him.

The abyss before Him has not a veil.

He spreads the north upon the empty space ;
He hangeth the earth upon nothingness.

He encloses the waters in the clouds ;
The skies are not broken under His wings.

He conceals the bright aspect of His throne
By spreading a cloud-shadow before it.

He hath drawn a circle on the waters
At the point where the light borders darkness. ‡

The columns of the heavens are startled ;
They are astounded at His threatenings.

With His power He makes the sea to shake ;
With His wisdom He crushes the dragon.

With His breath He purifies the Heavens ;
His hand has created the flying serpent. §

* After this ironical beginning, Job, in his turn, enters upon a brilliant description of the Divine splendour, in order to show Bildad that his lessons were out of place. These sorts of dissertations upon God were a kind of common subject for their eloquence. Each in his turn descants on it.

† In allusion to a legend analogous to that of Lake Asphaltites, where the giants who had revolted against God were submerged in the waters.

‡ Representing the horizon of the earth as though it were surrounded with water.

§ The constellation of the Dragon.

Behold a short abridgment of His works,
 A slight description of what has reached us.
 Who can understand the might of His power ?

Then Job took up his parable* and said :—

I swear by God, who denies me justice ;
 By the Almighty, who makes my soul bitter.

Whilst my breath shall be existing in me,
 And the spirit of God† in my nostrils.

My lips shall no more speak of injustice ;
 My tongue shall not even mention a lie.

Far be the thought for me to find reasons ;
 I will claim my innocence until death.

Bound to justify, I will not give up ;
 My heart reproaches not one of my days.

My foes may treat me as a wicked man ;
 My enemies as a man full of guilt.‡

What shall be the hope of the wicked man
 When God shall have cut the thread of his life ?

Will God lend His ear unto his groaning
 In the day when the anguish falls on him ?

* This word means sententious and rhythmic discourses generally. Job, having replied to the attacks of each of his friends and reduced them to silence, addresses them collectively in a discourse.

† The Divine spirit spread over the world, which gives life to every one.

‡ Job turns against his adversaries those principles they have turned against him. He admits that God is severe towards the wicked, but the wicked are his false friends, not himself, his friends have nothing to hope for.

Does he think with gladness on the Almighty?

Does he always call upon God with trust?

I will explain now the conduct of God;

I will unveil the Almighty's counsels.

You yourselves have beheld with your own eyes;

Why then do your vain thoughts lead you astray?

See the lot God reserved for the wicked,

The fate the wicked gets from the Most High.

If his sons increase, it is for the sword;

His offspring shall not be filled with bread.

The living shall be consumed by the plague;

None of his widows shall lament for him.

Although he heap up silver as the dust,

Although he collect clothing as the mud,

The just shall wear what he has collected;

The honest shall partake of his silver.

The house he has built is like that of the moth;

Like the shed built for the vineyard watchman.

He goes to sleep rich: it is the last time;

He opens his eyes: and all is no more.

Terror comes upon him as a deluge;

The storm carries him off in the midnight.

The east wind seizes and carries him off:

It sweeps him quite away out of his place.

God darts His shafts at him without ceasing;

He flies dismayed at the Almighty's blows.

They shall clap their hands over his ruin ;
 They shall hail his disappearance with whistling.

Silver comes out of the mine ;
 Gold from the place where refined ;
 Iron is drawn from the soil ;
 The quarried rock gives out brass.

Man has put back the pillars of darkness : *
 He searches among the extremest depths
 The stones hidden in the shadow of death.

Far from the beaten track he digs trenches,
 Tracks which the foot of the living knows not ;
 Far from man's dwelling suspended he swings. †
 Out of the earth he gains his daily bread,
 Turning over the inside as the fire.

The rocks are the places of the sapphire,
 There one finds the grains of the purest gold.

The path to it is not known to the bird,
 The eye of the hawk hath never seen it ;
 The feet of the wild beasts have trod not there,
 The tracks of the lion have left no trace.

Man digs down even to the granite rock ;
 He overturns the mountain from its base ;
 He cuts deep channels through the very rocks ;
 His eyes contemplate the hidden treasures.

* The author here describes the working of mines as practised in his day.

† The miners were suspended by a cord whilst working the walls of the mine.

He knows to stop the leaking of waters ;
He brings light upon that which was hidden.

But as for wisdom, where can it be found ? *
Where is the place to find intelligence ?

Man cannot understand its real value,
He has not seen it among the living.

The abyss says, It is not in my breast ;
The ocean says, It does not stay with me.

One does not get it among heaps of gold,
One cannot buy it at a silver price ;

The gold of Ophir weighs naught against it,
Nor the precious onyx, nor the sapphire.

Gold or crystal do not compare with it,
Nor would it exchange for vessels of gold.

Coral and crystal are naught beside it.

Possession of wisdom is more than pearls.

The Ethiopian topaz does not equal it,
Nor pure gold weigh in the scale against it.

Wisdom ! from whence does she come ?
Where is the place to find knowledge ?

She is hid from the eyes of living men,
She is a mystery to the birds of heaven.

Both the whirlpool and death do say,
We have only heard speak of her.

It is God who knows her ways ,
He alone knows where she dwells ;

* Wisdom is here, as it were, personified as a sort of assessor to the Divinity. Compare Proverbs, chap. viii.

For He sees to the ends of the earth,
He perceives all things under Heaven.

When He holds all the wind in the balance ;
When He measures the weight of the waters ;
When He lays down a law to rule the rain ;
When He traces a path for the lightning,
In an instant it is seen and proclaimed :
It is established and settled for ever.

Unto man He has said,
The fear of God is wisdom ;
To avoid evil is knowledge.

Job began again to take up his parable, and said * :—

Oh ! who will make me as I was before,
In the days when God watched over me,
When His lamp was shining over my head,
And its light dispelled the gloom in my way ?
Such as I was in the days of autumn ;†
When the friendship of God blessed my tent :
When the Almighty was still on my side,
And the sons of my youth were around me ;
When I washed my feet in melted butter,
And the rock shed for me brooklets of oil ;

* Job forgets his friends and begins, as he had already commenced, by a lament over his misfortunes.

† That is, at my full age.

When I stood at the gate of my city,*
And made my sitting in the market place.
At the sight of me the young men would hide,
And the old men would rise and be silent.
The princes even would keep back their words,
And place their open hands upon their mouths.
The voices of the chiefs remained dumb,
And their tongues adhered unto their palates.
The ear that heard me was called happy ;
The eye that saw me proclaimed my glory.
I delivered the poor who called on me,
And the orphan who had none to help him.
The man ready to perish did bless me ;
The heart of the widow I filled with joy.
I put on innocence as a garment ;
Justice was my mantle and my diadem.
I acted the part of eyes of the blind,
And filled the duty of feet to the lame.
I was as the father of all the poor :
I looked with care into the stranger's case.
I rendered naught the schemes of the wicked ;
I did snatch the prey from between his teeth.

* Job is always represented as a rich Bedouin living in the country, and returning from time to time to the city, where he was treated with great consideration. Let us understand that the "gate" in Oriental cities represented the Agora and the forum in Greek and Roman cities. It was a large space serving both for a market and a place of assembly and a court. There were benches on which the elders used to sit to judge the people.

I said then, Now I shall die in my nest ;*
 My days shall be many as are the sands.
 My roots are full in touch with the waters :
 The showers of the night are on my leaves.
 My fame shall be renewed without ceasing ;
 My bow† shall be strengthened in my hand.
 The helpers heard me and followed my word ;
 They kept silence while I expressed it.
 When I have spoken they shall not rejoin :
 My discourses shall soften them mildly.
 They waited upon me as for the rain :
 They opened their mouths as for the showers.
 When I smiled on them they did not return it :
 They watched attentively the turns of my face.
 When I went to them they lowered their head.
 I sat like a king surrounded by guards ;
 Like a consoler among the afflicted.
 But now I am jeered at by my juniors,
 Whom I would not have placed as their fathers,
 Or even among the dogs of my flocks.
 What can I do with the arms of the weak ?‡
 Unfit to attain to an age mature.

* That is, my house shall prosper, and in the bosom of my family.

† The bow is here meant as the symbol of strength.

‡ In all that follows, Job affects to connect the ancestors of his antagonists with those wild and savage races (a kind of gipsies) whose last survivors were dying of hunger about Palestine—a miserable people without bodily vigour, whom no one cared to emp'oy even for the most humble services.

Made lean by sad hunger and misery ;
Reduced to the crops of the desert bare,
The ancient domain of silence and waste.
Gathering their salads from off the shrubs,*
And using the roots of the broom for bread.
They inhabit the wildest of valleys,
In the caves of the earth and among the rocks.
You may hear them bray among the brushwood ;
They rove at random under the bushes.
Sons of madmen ! children of nameless men,
Driven from haunts of men with blows of whips.
And now I am made their subject of song ;
I the object of their malignant talk.
They move away from me as with horror ;
They do not keep their spittle from my face.
Without any restraint they insult me ;
They cast off restraint when in my presence.
These wretches have taken away my right :†
They are trying to disturb my footsteps ;
They level against me a loop-holed way.‡
They have destroyed the footpaths to my house ;
They work together to compass my fall.
Who would desire to bring them any aid ?

* That is, reduced to such misery as to take the young shoots of the trees for nourishment and eat them as salad.

† That is, they have risen to accuse me. In law proceedings the accuser stood on the right hand of the accused.

‡ He compares his position to a place under siege.

They assail me as through a heavy breach :
Their numbers are arrayed behind the rubbish.

Terrors have besieged me on every side :
My well-being is gone as a wind puff ;
My happiness has passed off as a cloud.

And now doth my soul exhale in groanings :
The days of affliction have seized on me.

The nights pierce my bones, and they break away ;
The evils which consume me do not sleep.

Grief has made me not easy to be known :
It tightens around me as doth my coat.

The Most High has thrown me down in the mire :
I am mingled with the ashes and dust.

I cry to Thee, oh God ! Thou hearest not ;
I stand before Thee and Thou lookest not.

Thou art become to me a ruthless foe ;
Thou assailest with the strength of Thine hand.

Thou mountest me on the wings of the wind ;
Thou dost melt me at the breath of the storm.

For I know well Thou bringest me to death,
To the meeting place of all living things.

Vain prayers ! He stretcheth forth His hand.
What good is it to protest against His blows ?

What avails to have wept with the unhappy ;
That I have had compassion for the poor ?

I looked for good, but evil was my lot :
I expected light, but the darkness came.

My bowels boil without intermission.
The days of misfortune are fixed on me.
I go all blackened, but not by the sun :
I rise in the assembly, and I cry.
I have become the like of the jackal,*
The mate of the daughter of the ostrich.
My skin is embrowned, and falls down in strips ;
My bones are consumed with an inward fire.
My music is changed to sounds of mourning ;
My pipe gives forth the noise of saddening tears.
I have made a covenant with mine eyes :
I dare not look upon a youthful girl.
I said, What share will God send me from on high ?
What will the Almighty send me from Heaven ?
Is not destruction reserved for the sinner ?
Misfortune to those who work wickedness ?
Does not God see the whole of my conduct ?
Does He not count the whole of my movements ?
If I have walked in the path of the lie,
If my feet have ever run after fraud,
Then God weigh me heavy in the just scale,
And He will admit my integrity sound.
If my foot has e'er turned from the right way ;
If my heart has ever followed mine eyes ; †
If any pollution has stuck to my hands,

* That is, like the animals which make a plaintive cry.

† That is to say, if instead of following the law of God I have followed the carnal judgment of the eyes of man.

Then another may eat what I have sown,
And all my branches may be uprooted.

If my heart has been led by a woman ;
If I e'er kept watch at my neighbour's door,*

May my wife become the slave of another ;
May others then take a share of my bed.

For this is a crime very horrible ;
A transgression punished by judges.

A fire which devours to nothingness,
Which would have destroyed all my fortune.

If I have withheld justice from my slave,
Or my servants in their lawsuits with me,

What will be, said I, when God shall arise ?
When He shall judge, how shall I answer Him ?

Who made me in my mother's bosom ; was He
made, too ?

The creator of us, was He formed in the womb ?

If I have refused the poor when he asked ;
If I've made the eyes of the widow droop ;

If I've eaten alone my share of bread ;
If the orphan has been denied his part ;

From childhood he's found a father in me ;
I have been the widow's guide since my birth ;

* That is, if I have spied his going out to commit adultery.

If I have seen men die for lack of clothes,
Or the needy wanting a covering,
Without being blessed by the chilled loins ;
Made warm by the fleece of my early lambs ;
If I lifted my hand against orphans ;
Because that I saw my help at the gate ; *Then let my arm fall from the shoulder blade,
And the fore arm be detached from its joint.
I have always dreaded the blows of God ;
I have felt my weakness before His power.
If I have ever put my trust in treasure ;
If I have ever said to gold, Thou art my hope ;
If I have joyed that my riches were great ;
That with my hands I had heaped up treasure ;
If on seeing the sun in his grandeur,
And the moon come forth in greatest splendour,
If my heart has been enticed in secret ;
My hand ever been held to my mouth.†
(This again is a capital crime ;
That I should abjure God from on high.)
If I have enjoyed the ills of my foe,
If I have rejoiced when evil reached him ;
If I have allowed my throat to trespass
In demanding his death with solemn oaths ;
If the men of my tent have ever said,
Where find we one not content at his table ?

* That is, near the judges. See p. 64.

† Alluding to the worship of the stars prevalent among the Arabs.

(Ne'er has the stranger passed the night outside ;
My door has always been open to travellers).

If I have like most men concealed my faults,
In hiding my crime in my own bosom ;

If fearing to show at the great meetings,
Or dreading the reproach of the tribesmen,
I have stayed without crossing my threshold.

Who will give me some one to understand ? *

See my signature ! Let the Almighty answer me,
Let my adversary also write his note of hand.

I will carry it tied to my shoulder,†
And bind it to my forehead as a crown.

I will render to my judge count of my steps ;
I will approach him as proud as a prince.

If my lambs have ever cried against me ;
If tears have ever been shed in my fields ;

If I have eaten fruits I never bought ;
If I have extorted from rightful owners ;

Then instead of wheat let me have thorns,
And tares instead of barley.

(Here end the discourses of Job.)

And the three friends of Job ceased to answer him, because he persisted in saying he was just.

* Job here interrupts himself to declare that he is ready to sign all the protests he has made. He wishes that God would do as much. The practice of written pleadings existed in Egypt.—Diod. Sic. I. 75.

† That is to say, so far from hiding it as a revelation of shame against myself, I will show it as openly as I can like a title of honour.

Then the anger of Elihu,* the son of Barakel the Buzite,† of the race of Ram,‡ was kindled. It was kindled at first against Job because he persisted in maintaining his innocence before God ; it was also kindled against his three friends because they had not given suitable answers to him and had failed to convince him. Elihu could not at the time reply to Job, because the other speakers were older than he was ; seeing, then, that they had no replies in their mouth he put himself in a violent rage.

Then Elihu, the son of Barakel the Buzite, took up the word and said :—

I am young and you are old :
That is why I tremble and fear
To make you know my sentiments.

I said to myself, The days wish to speak ;
The numberless years will reveal wisdom.

But wisdom is a spirit placed in man : §
The breath of the Most High makes him wise.

It is not old age which can make prudence,
Nor are they old men who discern justice.

* This person does not appear in the prologue. There is nothing else about him in the epilogue, and this is one of the reasons for believing that the discourse which follows is by another hand.

† A tribe of Arabia-Deserta, related to those of Uz.

‡ A name not known elsewhere.

§ The Hebrews deemed all forces physical and moral to be emanations from the Deity.

That is why I said, Listen unto me,
I also will explain my opinion.

I have attended to all your discourses,
I have lent my ears to all your reasons,
Until you exhausted the discussion.

I have followed you most attentively,
And I say that none have refuted Job,
Not one has fairly replied to his words.

Do not say that man is wisdom itself ;
God alone, and not man, can see through him.

Although he has not spoken directly to me,
I shall endeavour to answer him through you.

See, they are dismayed ! they do not reply,
Their words appear to have deserted them.

I waited until you had ceased to speak,
That they might agree there was naught to say.

I proceed to reply for my own part,
I proceed now to state that which I know,

For I am well primed for discoursing now ;
The spirit which swells my heart oppresses me.

My belly is like a wine fermenting,
Like a bottle of wine about to burst.

I am going to speak to relieve me :
I will open my lips and will answer.

I do not wish to respect any one ;
I do not seek to flatter any one ;

I do not know how to flatter people :
If I do may my Maker take me off !

I pray thee then, Job, hearken to my words ;
Lend thine ear to all my discourse.

Behold now I open my mouth ;
My tongue speaks the words under my palate.
My words express my uprightness of heart ;
My lips will speak frankly that which I think.

It is the spirit of God which made me ;
The breath of the Almighty gives me life.
If then thou canst do so, answer thou me ;
Prepare thine arguments and be ready.

In the face of God I am thine equal ;
I also, I have been drawn from the mire.
My terrors at least will not overcome thee ;
The weight of my majesty will not crush thee.*

Yes, thou hast said in my ears,
I hear the sound of thy words,
I am pure and free from all kind of sin ;
Without reproach, and no wickedness in me.

God searches me for motives of hatred ;
He treats me as His bitter enemy.

He has put my feet in the stocks :
He has His eye on all my ways.

* An allusion to those ideas which Job frequently brings forward, that his defence is not free—that he does not stand on equal ground with God—that He crushes him with terrors and visions which take away his presence of mind.

I answer, In so saying thou art not just ;
God is far above all human beings.

Why dost thou plead against Him ?
To none does He justify His acts.

God speaks once to man ;
Yea, twice ! (but man does not listen).

At first by dreams and visions of the night,
When sleep weighs heavy upon mortal men,
And they sleep soundly on their quiet beds.

Then He doth open the ear of man,
And there He doth seal His warnings.

To turn him away from his evil deeds,
And to preserve him from his pride ;

To save his soul from the open pit,
His life from the dart which threatens it.

Afterwards, pain holds him upon his bed,
With a continual tearing of his bones.

Man takes his bread then with utter disgust ;
His heart turns at dishes most delicate.

His flesh disappears at a glance ;
His denuded bones, they vanish.

His soul is a finger length from the tomb ;
His life is delivered to the exterminators.*

But he has found a mediating angel,
One of numberless celestial beings,
Who reveals to him that which he should do.

* That is to say, the angels who execute the Divine vengeance.

God has pity, and says to the angel,
Spare him from a descent into the pit ;
I have obtained sufficient satisfaction.

His flesh becomes more fresh than in childhood ;
He returns to the days of his early youth.

He prays to God and God is favourable :
With happiness he sees the face of the Most High ;
The Most High returns him his innocence.

He goes away singing among men,
I have sinned ; I have been wanting in justice ;
I have not been treated according to my wrongs.

God has spared my soul from the pit :
He permits me still to enjoy the light.

Behold what it is that God hath done !
Twice—thrice—with man.

He hath even brought him back from the tomb,
To enlighten him with the light of life.

Be attentive, oh, Job ! and listen to me :
Keep thyself silent, and then let me speak.

If thou hast aught to say, now answer me ;
Speak, for I desire to be found quite just.

If thou hast naught to say listen to me :
Be silent, and I will teach thee wisdom.

Elihu recovered himself and said :—

Wise men, pray now listen to my words ;
Learned men, now lend me your ears.

For the ear distinguishes words,
 As the palate distinguishes meats.

Let us endeavour to find out justice ;
 Let us search ourselves for that which is good.

Job has said, I am innocent ;
 God denies me the justice which is due.

When I assert my right I am taken for a liar ;
 My wounds are raw, though I have no sin.

What kind of man is this Job, in truth ?
 He drinks in blasphemy like as water.

He has associated with evil-doers ;
 He has made companions of the impious.

For he has said, What does it serve a man
 To have a good understanding with God ?

Listen unto me ! men of understanding !
 Far be it from God ! Iniquity !

Far be it from the Almighty ! Injustice !

He gives to each according to his works ;
 He allots them the price of their conduct.

No—no—God never does commit evil ;
 The Almighty does not falsify right.

Who has given to Him to govern the earth ?
 Who has trusted Him with the care of the universe ?

If He should consider only Himself,
 If He should withdraw His spirit and His breath,
 All flesh would expire in a moment,
 Man would at once return to dust.

In the name of reason listen to this ;
Lend your ears to the sound of my words.

Shall he who hates justice, shall he rule the world ?
Darest thou condemn the just and the mighty ?

Who says to kings : Wretch !
To the princes : Scoundrel !

Who excepteth not in favour of the great ;
Who preferreth not the rich before the poor,
For both are the work of His hands.

The tyrants die suddenly in the middle of night ;
Their people awake and wander to and fro ;
The strong disappears, and none know who strikes
him.

For God's eyes are open to the conduct of men ;
He doth see distinctly all his steps.

There is no darkness, there is no shadow,
Where one can hide those who commit evil.

God has no need to look at man twice
Before He pronounces judgment upon him.

He breaks up the strong without investigation,
And He doth put others in their places ;
For He knows the whole of their actions ;
He destroys them at night,* and He breaks them
He strikes them as He strikes malefactors,
In the sight of the crowd looking on.

* That is, when they do not expect it.

For they keep themselves far away from Him ;
 They neglect to observe His commandments.
 They have made the cry of the poor reach Him ;
 They have forced Him to hear the cry of the
 wretched.

Who can find fault when God has pardoned ;
 Who can behold Him when He hides His face *
 From the nations and from the people too ?
 He makes to cease the reign of the impious ;
 He prevents them from being the scourge of the
 people.

The wicked hath said unto God,
 I have been punished ; I will sin no more ;
 Show me that which I have never yet seen ;
 If I have done wrong I will do it no more.†
 Shall God advise with thee to punish a man ?
 Will He say to thee, Be thou judge for Me ?
 Speak according to that which thou knowest.

Let the man of understanding answer ;
 Let the wise man lend his ear to me.

Job has not talked according to knowledge ;
 His speech is not consistent with reason.

* God hides His face from a nation with respect to impenetrable designs and unforeseen revolutions.

† That is, this wicked man would not have submitted to the first chastisement of God, nor have recognised that he might have deserved it for faults of which he was ignorant. It is probable that Elihu wished to designate Job indirectly as coming under this kind of iniquity.

Ah, well ! let Job continue as he has proved ;
Since his answers have been as a wicked man's.

To his crimes he has added impiety ;
He has scoffed at us to our very face ;
He has wearied God with his tiresome talk.

Elihu then took up the word again and said * :—

Canst thou believe that thou hast had reason ;
That thou hast been justified before God ?

When thou hast said, Does innocence serve me ?
How am I better treated than if I had sinned ?

For me, I am going to answer thee,
And thy friend also at the same time.

Consider the Heavens, and behold them ;
See the clouds, they are high enough for thee.

If thou hast sinned, what is it to Him ? †
If thy crimes multiply, how does it concern Him ?

If thou art just, how does it profit Him ?
What advantage is your innocence to Him ?

Thy sins affect only those who are like thee ;
Thy justice can serve only the sons of men.

* These renewals lead one to believe at first sight that the different parts of Elihu's discourse were composed in succession. But it is the practice of Eastern people to make use of the same formula several times in the course of a narrative. "He said" is equivalent to inverted commas.

† The practice of designating God in the third person was usual among the ancient Hebrews. The name of Elihu (He is my God) is an example of it.

The weak, it is true, groan under oppression ;
They cry aloud in the hands of the strong.

There are none to say, Where is God our Creator,
Who filleth the night with hymns of joy ? *

Who instructs us, instead of the beasts of the field ;
Who maketh us wise before the birds of the air.

See the people who cry without being heard,
Under the tyrannous weight of the wicked.

God, in truth, does not listen to folly ;
The Almighty refuseth to turn His eyes.

When thou complainest, He careth not for thee ;
Thy cause is before Him, await thou His judgment.

Because His anger is not excited,
Because He hath seemed to ignore our faults,
Job takes advantage to talk at random,
Increasing his words without true knowledge.

Elihu further said :—

Await awhile, I will give thee lessons ;
For I have a motive of value to God.

My principles I shall bring from afar ; †
I will give my reasons to my Creator.

In truth my words are not mere lies ;
A man of knowledge speaks to thee.

* That is, changes misfortune into gladness.

† Elihu announces, as before, that he is about to reveal a profound and unexpected doctrine. That is why he asks for time to collect his ideas.

God is great, He repelleth no one ;
 The power of His knowledge is very great.
 He doth not suffer the wicked to live ;
 He rendereth justice unto the feeble.
 He doth not withdraw His eyes from the just ;
 He maketh him sit on the throne of kings :
 He exalteth him to the end of time.
 If perchance they fall into captivity,
 Or are taken in the bonds of misfortune,*
 He makes them see they deserve what they get
 By their wickedness and by their great pride.
 He opens their ear to His reproaches :
 He exhorts them to renounce iniquity.
 If they listen to Him, if they submit,
 He finishes their days with happiness,
 And He concludes all their years with pleasure.
 But if not, they shall perish by the sword ;
 They shall die without being recognised.
 The wicked have conceived spite in their heart ;
 They pray not when God casts them into bonds.
 They die early in the midst of their youth ;
 Their lives are like those of the Hierodules.†
 But God delivers the humble who suffer ;
 It is by their suffering He comforts them.

* That which follows refers directly to Job.

† Hierodules, of the temples of Syria, devoted to infamous prostitution and an early death.

As for thee ! thou shalt pass from a narrow prison
Into a space quite free and limitless ;
Thy table shall be filled with dainty meats.

Thou hast filled a wicked man's measure of crime ;
Thou hast undergone the sentence and penalty.

Do not hope to avert God's wrath by a forfeit,
Or expect to escape by a heavy ransom.

Believe not that riches will enter in reckoning ;
Gold and worldly treasures are nothing to Him.

Invoke not, then, the night of thy vows ; *
The night when men are destroyed on the spot.

Take heed to repress all thoughts of guilt,
Nor dare to prefer the death of affliction.

God is sublime in His mightiness :
Who knows like Him how to give lessons ?

Who shall trace for Him the way He should take ?
Who to Him can say, Thou hast done evil ?

Dream rather then to glorify His works :
Let the songs of humanity praise them.

Let every mortal admire them ;
Let man contemplate them from afar.

God is far too great for us to know Him :
The number of His years is beyond count.

* Alluding to those passages where Job appeals to his vows for death or a prompt judgment of God. The judgments of God were thought always to be executed in the night, when He struck suddenly kings and nations. See above, pp. 78—79.

He draws to Himself the streams of waters ;
He letteth fall the rain, and forms the clouds.

The clouds all spread themselves everywhere ;
They fall in drops upon the crowd of men.

How can we know the rending of the clouds,
The crepitations of his flag ?*

Presently He covers His lightning as with a curtain ;
Again He seems to hide in the bottom of the sea.†

Storms serve at the same time to punish man
And to provide him with plenty of food.

He doth clothe His hand with luminous squares,
And He launcheth them against His enemies.

The noise of His marching announceth it ;
The fright of the flocks revealeth His approach.‡

Listen ! Listen ! to the noise of His voice ;
The rumbling which proceeds from His mouth.

He fills with it all the vault of heaven ;
His lightnings reach to the ends of the earth.§

After the lightning comes the roar of His voice ;
He thunders loudly with a stately sound ;

* The clouds which carry the thunder are represented as the tents in which God hides Himself when He darts His arrows.

† He alludes here to the alternations of light and darkness which take place during a storm. The clouds are compared to a dark and deep sea.

‡ The ancients attributed to the flocks a presentiment of thunder. Virg. Georg. I, 373.

§ The earth is conceived to be like a stretched-out carpet ; the extremities of the earth, as it were, the borders of the carpet. See above, p. 86.

His voice is heard ; the dart is then in hand.
 God thunders with a voice wondrous to hear ;
 He does great things we cannot understand :
 He says to the snows, Fall ye to the earth ;
 He commands the waves and the heavy rains.
 He thus puts seals upon the hand of man,*
 So that he may learn to know his Maker.
 Then the wild beast goes into his shelter
 And lays himself down in his den.
 The storm rushes from its hidden retreat ; †
 And the northerly breezes bring the cold.
 At the breathing of God the ice is formed,
 The water contracts and is pressed close together.
 He fills the cloud with watery vapour :
 He thrusts before Him thunder-bearing clouds.
 Under His direction they go here and there,
 To carry out commands as He ordains
 Upon the face of the earth inhabited.
 It may be He will punish His creatures,
 Or He may make them instruments of mercy.
 Job ! lend thine ear to all this :
 Listen to the wonders of God.
 Dost thou know the chief end of His wonders,
 And why He makes fire shine out of the clouds ?

* He condemns him to inaction by frost, and by the impossibility of labouring in the fields.

† A sort of cave of Eolus, where the winds repose. Compare p. 87. Psalm cxxxv. 7 ; Vulgate, cxxxiv.

Dost thou know the equal law of the clouds?
 The secret of Him whom we know is perfect?
 Wherefore thy garments are they much too hot
 When the earth rests from the blast of midday?
 Wouldest thou beat the clouds with a hammer,
 And make them solid as a mirror of metal?
 Give us to know what you can answer Him;
 Rather let us be silent: we are so ignorant.
 Let not my talk be reported to Him.
 What man has ever wished to lose his life?*
 In a moment one sees not the sun
 When its light is hidden behind the clouds,
 A puff of wind passes and the sky is clear.†
 A golden ray comes sudden from the north;
 Oh! wonderful splendour of God!
 We shall never reach near the Almighty,
 Great in power, right and justice, answering none.
 Let man then go always in fear of Him;
 He doth not regard the wise men of earth.

Then Jehovah answered Job ‡ out of the midst of the tempest,§ and said:—

* Alluding to those passages where Job, at the risk of incurring death, demands that his speech should be carried to the throne of God.

† Elihu seems to wish to say that we can see the Divinity only when He passes in the midst of many clouds.

‡ He takes no notice of Elihu, because doubtless this latter part was interpolated after the poem was finished.

§ God, according to the ideas of the Hebrews, only revealed Himself to man when hidden by clouds, and was announced by thunder.

Who is he who thus obscures Providence
In discourses denuded of knowledge?

Come, gird up thy loins as a man,*
I am going to ask thee, so answer Me.

Where wast thou when I fixed the world's foundations?

Tell Me now, if thou hast any wisdom.

Doubtless thou knowest who ruled the measures,
Who has stretched out the cord over the earth.

Also upon what their foundations rest,
And where he has placed the corner stones;

When the stars of the morning sang in choir,
And the sons of God gave forth cries of joy; †

Who hath enclosed the ocean within bounds
When it bursts forth and rushes from the womb.‡

When I gave him the cloud for a garment,
And the darkest clouds for swaddling clothes;

When I had traced the boundaries for him,
And placed for him the doors and bolts.

I said to him, Here thou shalt come; not there;
Here the pride of thy waves shall come to an end.

* That is, prepare thyself to answer. Jehovah refers to the wish so often expressed by Job to know that God would contend with him.

† As to the sons of God, see above, p. 1.

‡ The sea is supposed to have burst forth from the bosom of the earth and to have invaded the continent.

Hast thou ever commanded the morning ?
 Hast thou taught the sunrise to know its place,
 That it might take hold of the ends of the earth,
 That it might shake off the doers of evil ? *

At his coming earth changes like to fine clay, †
 The universe shows as if under rich clothing.

The doers of evil extinguish their light ; ‡
 The arm lifted for crime is now broken.

Hast thou gone down to the depths of the sea ? §
 Hast thou walked in the bottom of the deep ?

Have the gates of death been shown unto thee ?
 Hast thou seen the threshold of the darkness ?

Hast thou encompassed the length of the earth ?
 Speak now, since thou knowest everything.

Knowest thou the way to the dwelling of the light,
 Or the place where the darkness resides ?

The manner in which their bounds are settled ?
 Hast known the road which leads to their dwelling ?

* The earth is supposed to be like a stretched-out carpet. The sun, shining instantaneously from one end to the other, frightens by his sudden appearance the evil-doers ; they try to flee, and then, as one takes the four corners of a carpet to shake out the dust, they are shaken off.

† Sunrise has an effect upon the earth like a seal on fine clay in giving form and relief to the surface of the universe, which, during the night, was like an indistinct chaos. The Easterns sealed on fine clay instead of wax.

‡ The night is the time for evil-doers, for that is when they are able to carry on their misdeeds.

§ The Hebrews thought that the bottom of the sea, like the bottom of a well or a fountain, was the source from whence it sprung.

Doubtless thou knowest—thou wast born before;
The number of thy days is amply great.

Hast thou been in the treasures of the snow?

Hast ever seen the storehouse of the hail

Which I have kept for the time of distress,
For the day of warfare and the battle?

By what route is the light parcelled out?

How is the east wind spread over the earth?

Who has opened the furrows for the waves? *

Who has marked the path for the lightning darts?

For the rain falls on the inhabited earth,

And also on the desert where no man is,†

That the arid plain may be well watered,

And the grass of the meadows be made green.

Had ever the rain a father?

Who engendered the dewdrops?

From whose bosom has the ice been brought forth?

Who has produced the hoar frost of Heaven?

The waters are condensed like unto stone,

The surface of the depths is made hardened.

Is it thou who hast tied the bands of the Pleiades? ‡

Or canst thou relax the chains of the Giants? §

* The rain falling in continual drops was thought to trickle from little spouts which God kept in the heavens.

† God insists on this fact in order to humble man, and to show that the earth was not made for him only.

‡ That is, who keeps them tied together.

§ See p. 20.

Is it thou who bringest the constellations to time?

Who hast made rise the Great Bear with his little ones? *

Dost thou know aught of the laws of Heaven?

Dost thou rule their influence on the earth?

Canst thou then in commanding the clouds
Draw down upon thee torrents of rain?

Does the lightning travel at thy command?
Do ever they say to thee, Now behold us?

Who has put wisdom inside of man?

Who has placed knowledge within his heart?

Who can reckon the stars correctly?

Who turn over the urns of Heaven,†

To drop on the dust in a solid mass,
And make the earth of the field cohesive?

Dost thou provide the lion with his prey?
And satisfy the wants of the young lions

When they are lying couched in their dens,
And lying in wait among the brushwood?

Who provides food for the raven

When his young ones cry out to God,
And wander to and fro from hunger?

* The little ones of the Great Bear are the three stars which form the tail.

† The Hebrews and the Arabs described the rain-bearing clouds as leather bottles or jugs full of water.

Dost thou know when the chamois brings forth ?
 Hast ever seen the hinds when they litter ?

Hast thou counted the months when they go ?
 Dost thou know the time they bring forth ?

They kneel down and deposit their burthen,
 And then are they free from all their pain.

Their young ones get strong and grow in the air,
 They take themselves off and return not again.

Who has given to the wild ass freedom ?
 Who has broken the bonds of the savage one ?

To whom I gave the wilds for a dwelling,
 That he may remain on the plains of salt.*

He disdains the tumult of the cities,
 He heeds not the voice of the driver ;

He runs through the mountains to find pasture ;
 He follows there the smallest blade of grass.

Will the wild buffalo do work for thee ?
 Will he stand in thy stable for a night ?

Wilt thou fasten him to land with a cord ?
 Will he harrow the valleys behind thee ?

What wilt thou do with him ? his strength is great.
 Wilt thou leave him the care of thy labour ?

Wilt thou beg of him to get in thy grain,
 Or gather the wheat on the threshing floor ?

* It is a characteristic quality of the greater part of the deserts in the East that a layer of salt constantly forms on the surface of the soil.

The wing of the ostrich beats without ceasing ; *
Is it, however, a pious wing or as another wing ? †
She abandons her eggs to the earth ;
She leaves them to hatch in the sand.
She thinks not that any foot might crush them ;
The beasts of the field might trample on them.
She is harsh to her young ones, as though not hers ;
She cares but little that her griefs have been vain
It is God who has deprived her of wisdom,
Who has not given her a share of knowledge.
But see her, she beats her sides to rise ; ‡
She laughs at the horse and his rider.
Is it thou who hast given strength to the horse,
And clothed his neck with a flowing mane ?
Is it thou who makest him leap like a grasshopper ?
His neighing superb spreads terror around.
He digs up the ground with his foot,
He is proud of his strength ;
He goes in front of armed foes.
He laughs at fear, he does not tremble,
Neither does he retreat before the sword.

* The ostrich walks with the wings half unfolded, and thus it appears to beat its wings at each step.

† Here is a play of words alluding to the stork, which the Hebrews called "Hasida," or pious. The writer contrasts the stork with the ostrich, and sees a wonder in the fact of two birds being alike, and yet one should be an example of piety, and the other a prodigy of harshness.

‡ When she takes a start in beating her wings the ostrich does not succeed in flying, but she outruns the horse in swiftness.

On his back he carries the quiver,
The glittering spear, and the javelin.

He quivers, he neighs, he devours the earth ; *
He is beside himself at the sound of the trumpet.

At the trumpet's sound he says, Let us go ;
Afar off there rages the battle,
The thundering chief, and the cries of the army.

Is it by thy wisdom the hawk takes his flight,
And spreads his wings on his way to the south ?

Does the eagle rise at thy command,
And build his nest in the lofty heights ?

He dwells in the crags, he fixes his nest
In the clefts of the rock and the battlements.

From thence he spies out his feeding place ;
His eyes pierce the far distant.

His young ones are gorged with blood ;
Wherever the dead are he finds them.

Then Jehovah, addressing Himself to Job, said :—

Can the censor of the Almighty hold up his
head ?

The accuser of God, can he answer to all that ?

* Common expressions among the Arab poets to denote the rapid flight of a horse who gallops with his mouth open as though to devour the space and ground before him.

And Job answered, and said :—

I am nothing. What shall I answer ?
I can only put my hand on my mouth.

I have spoken once ; I shall not reply.
Twice ; I will not add another word.

And Jehovah spoke again to Job out of the
midst of the tempest, and said :—

Gird up thy loins like a man ;
I am about to question thee. Answer Me.

Dost thou wish to render naught My justice ?
To condemn Me to justify thine own self ?

Hast thou an arm like unto God ?
Dost thou speak with a voice like His ?

Adorn thyself with majesty and glory ;
Clothe thyself with magnificence and splendour ?

Give free vent unto thy fits of anger ;
Humble the proud with a look ?

With a glance overwhelm the proud ;
Break up the wicked on the spot ?

Destroy them altogether in the dust ;
Cover their faces with eternal shadow ?

Then I also will praise thee ;
I will recognise thine hand to serve thee.

Look at Behemoth,* whom I have made as well as
you ;

He eateth the grass like an ox.

His strength is in his loins,
The power of his muscles in his belly.

He moves his tail like a cedar ;
The sinews of his thighs are interlaced.

His bones are like tubes of brass ;
His limbs are like bars of iron.

This is the first of the works of God ;
His Creator has given him his own sword.†

The mountains furnish him with pasture ;
There he revels with the beasts of the field.

He lies down under the lotus ;
He hides in the reeds of the marsh.

The lotus covers him with its shadow ;
The willows of the brooks do surround him.

When the river overflows he takes to flight ;
He shall not fear if Jordan reach his jaws.

Endeavour to attack him in front,
To take him in a net—to pierce his nose.‡

* The Hebrew form of the Egyptian name of the hippopotamus (Pehemont). The greater part of the description which follows applies to this animal, but in some parts the author gives way to his imagination, and seems to draw the portrait of a fancy monster like the martichore—the cockatrice of the middle ages.

† An allusion to the defences with which the jaws of the hippopotamus are armed.

‡ It is the practice in the East to put a ring in the nose of captured animals.

Wilt thou draw out Leviathan* with a hook?
 Wilt thou fasten his tongue with a cord?†
 Wilt thou pass a rush through his nostrils?‡
 Wilt thou pierce his gills with a hook?§
 Will he address thee with urgent prayers?
 Will he speak to thee with gentle words?
 Will he make a bargain with thee?
 Will he engage to serve thee always?
 Wilt thou play with him as with a sparrow?
 Wilt tie him with thread to amuse thy children?
 Do the associates|| make him an object of trade?
 Do they divide him among the Chananeans?¶
 Wilt thou riddle his hide with darts?
 Wilt thou pierce his head with the fisher's harpoon?
 Do thou place only thy hand upon his head?
 And thou wilt not wish to recommence the fight.

* This name is given to the crocodile; but, as we have observed before, it is less a portrait of a given animal than of a fanciful beast—a kind of dragon.

† The line of the fisherman is here compared to the bridle which holds the mouth of beasts of burden.

‡ The fishermen, when they have caught a fish, pass a rush through his nostrils.

§ Egyptian fishermen are still in the habit, when they have caught a large fish which they wish to sell alive, to pass a ring through his gills, and attach it to the shore by a cord.

|| The corporation or trade body—doubtless the fishermen.

¶ The Chananeans or Phœnicians having been for a long time in possession of the trade, the word “Chananean” has become synonymous with “merchant,” like the later word “Chaldean” with “astrologer,” &c.

Ah ! Ah ! See thy boldness stands amazed !
 What ! Thy face doth not frighten him !
 If there is not a man bold enough to provoke him,
 Who then will dare to resist Me to My face ?
 To whom am I under obligation to acquit Myself ?
 Everything under heaven belongs to Me.
 I will speak yet again of his limbs,*
 Of his strength and the beauty of his armour.
 Who has lifted the border of his garment ? †
 Who has inspected the double line of his teeth :
 Who hath opened the beatings of his face ? ‡
 Around his teeth there dwelleth terror.
 Splendid are the lines which form his scales,
 Like unto seals closely fastened.
 Each of them touches his neighbour closely,
 So that a breath could not pass between.
 They adhere the one to the other ;
 They hold together and none can separate them.
 His sneezing makes the light to shine ;
 His eyes are like the eyelids of the dawn.
 Firebrands go out of his mouth,
 And sparks of fire escape from it.
 His nostrils dart out smoke,
 Like a boiling caldron or a basin.

* God takes up again the description of Leviathan.

† That is to say, his carapace—the upper shell.

‡ That is to say, his jawbones.

His breath enkindles coals,
And flame goes out of his throat.

Strength is found in his neck,
And before him leaps the terror.

The bones of his flesh are fixed ;
They are coagulated and immovable.

His heart is solid like a stone,
And hard like the nether millstone.*

When he lifts himself the bravest tremble ;
They flee away as if all were lost.

When attacked with a sword he has no sword ;
Neither dart nor arrow nor breast-plate to hold.

He regards iron as so much straw,
And brass as so much rotten wood.

The daughter of the bow † does not make him flee.
The stones of the slinger are to him as a straw.

The club is no more than a bit of thatch ;
He derides the slash of the lance and the dart.

His belly is armed with sharp points ;
He is like a harrow that lies in the mud.

He maketh the whirlpool boil like a caldron :
The sea he makes like a saucepan of perfume.‡

* The mill was composed of two stones, one placed over the other, the hardest was placed beneath.

† That is to say, the arrow.

‡ Alluding to the odour of musk which proceeds from the crocodile.

He leaves after him a track of light ;
 One would say that the depth had white hair.
 There is not his master upon the earth ;
 He is not created to fear anything.
 He looks in the face all that is lofty ;
 He is the king among all the wild beasts.

And Job answered Jehovah and said :—
 I know that Thou canst do everything ;
 That nothing is beneath Thy power.
 Who dares to judge Providence without knowing ? *
 Yes ; I have said what I did not understand,
 Of wonders beyond me which I did not know.
 Hearken unto me, I am going to speak ;
 I wish to question. Answer me.†
 Up till now I have heard speak of Thee ;
 But now mine eye beholdeth Thee.
 This is why I withdraw and make repentance,
 Repenting in the dust and upon ashes.

EPILOGUE.

AND after Jehovah had addressed these words to Job, He said to Eliphaz of Teman, “ I am irritated against thee and against thy two friends, because you have not spoken of Me according to the truth,

* Job is bewildered, and his spirit struck with the terrible apostrophes of God. He repeats the same words as God ; they are still in his ears, and, by the preoccupation they cause, deprive him of coherent thought.

† The same remark.

like My servant Job has done. Now, go and take seven heifers and seven rams; then find My servant Job, and offer them as a holocaust. Job, My servant, will pray for you, and out of regard to him I will not punish you for your folly: for you have not spoken of Me according to the truth, as My servant Job has done." Eliphaz of Teman, and Bildad of Suah, and Sophar of Naama then went away and did as Jehovah had ordered them, and Jehovah had regard to the prayers of Job.

And for a reward to Job for having prayed for his friends, Jehovah reinstated him in his former condition, and doubled everything which had formerly belonged to him. In fact, all his brothers, all his sisters, all those who had formerly known him came to find him; they ate bread with him in his house; they offered him their condolences, and they consoled him for all the misfortunes which Jehovah had heaped on him, and each of them gave him a *kesita** and a ring of gold; and Jehovah blessed the latter days of Job still more than the first, and he possessed fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, and a thousand pair of oxen, and a thousand she-asses.

He had seven sons and three daughters; and

* Money of the patriarchal age.

he named the first, Pigeon*; the second, Cinnamon*; and the third, Paint Box†.

In all the earth there were no women so handsome as the daughters of Job, and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers.

And Job lived after that one hundred and forty years, and he saw his sons and the sons of his sons until the fourth generation.

And Job died old and filled with days.

* TRANSLATORS' NOTE.—In the authorised version these three names are given as "Jemima," which signifies a pigeon—the emblem of purity and gentleness; "Kezia," which means cassia or cinnamon, a perfume particularly grateful to the olfactory nerves of the sterner sex; and "Keren Happuch," which signifies the horn or box containing the cosmetic used by Oriental women for darkening their eyelids (black antimony). The horn was used much as some European people use it for snuff.

† He alludes to a box of black paint, composed chiefly of antimony, which the women of the East used to paint their eyelids and eyebrows.

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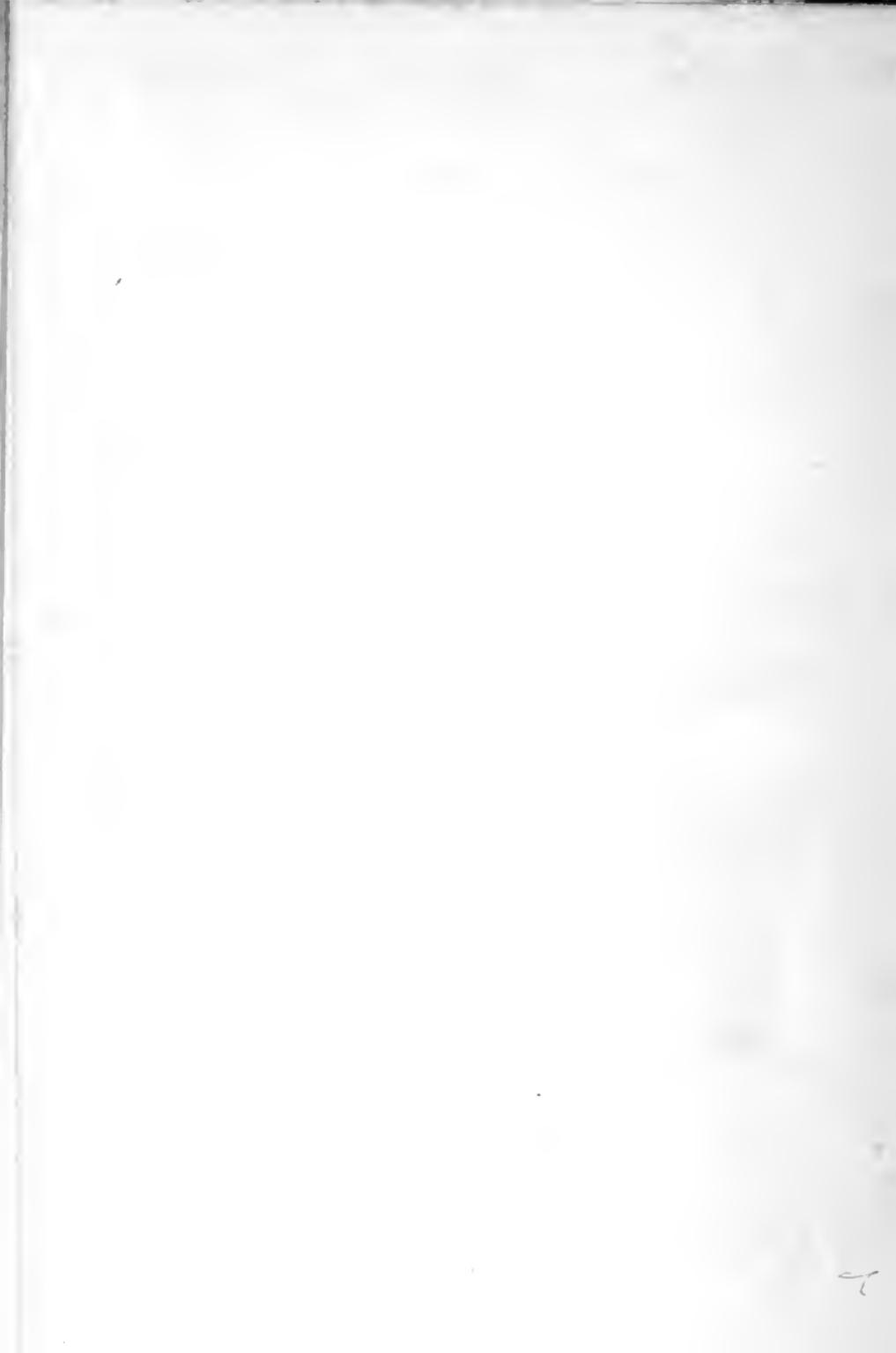
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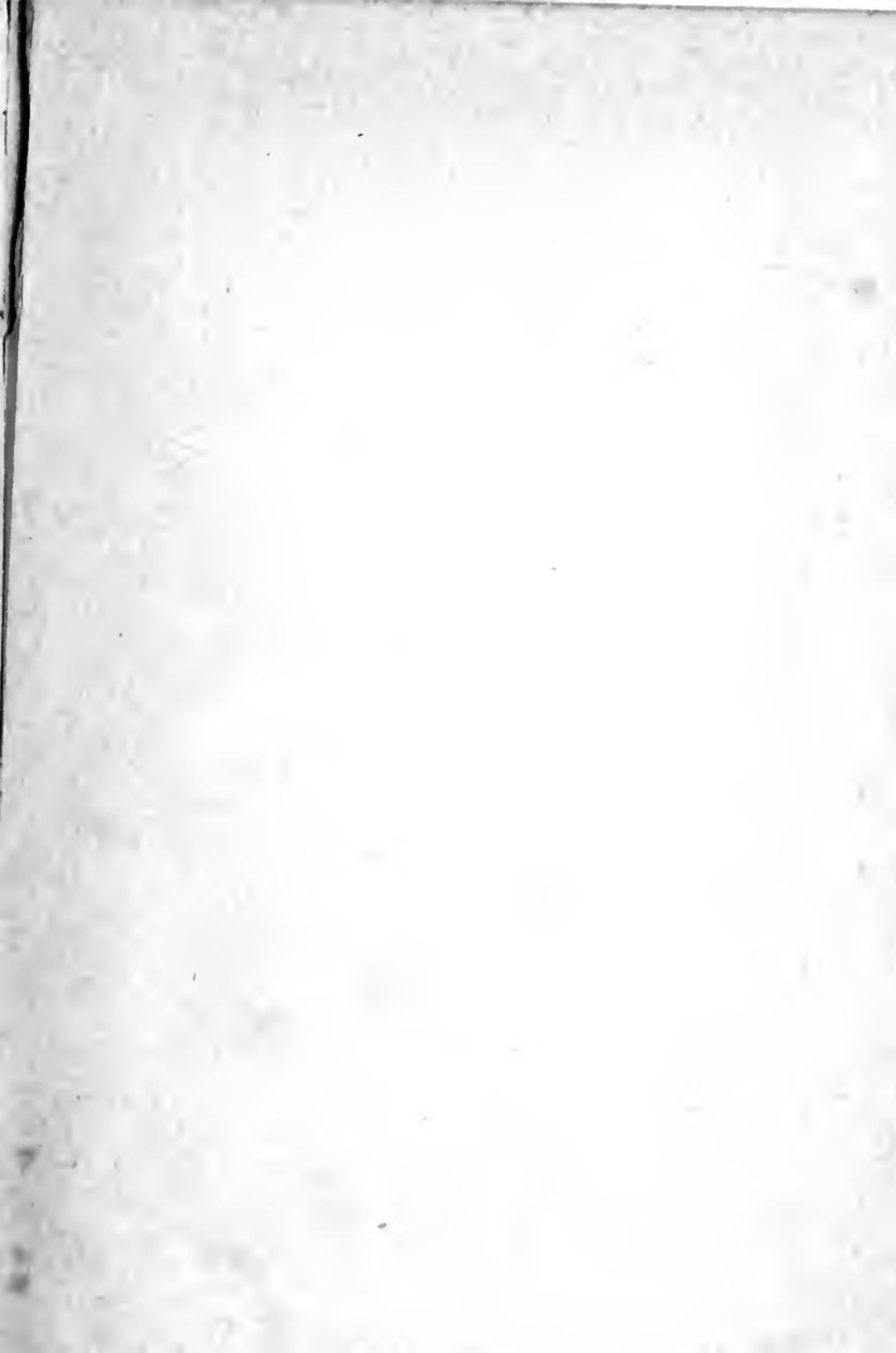
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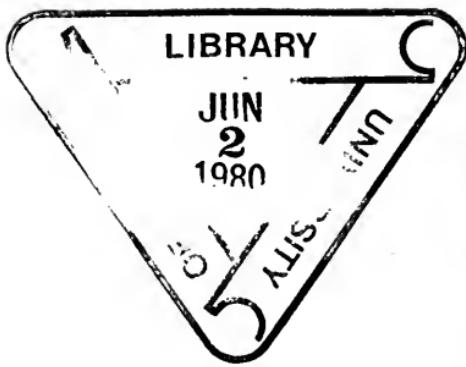
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